



Tarragona is a city of great character, a city with a pure Mediterranean essence, with a two thousand year old Roman past recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. Tarragona is living history, gastronomy, nature and sea culture. A city on the move 365 days a year with multiple activities capable of arousing emotions in a destination that invites you to get to know it and discover it slowly, without rushing, savouring every corner. The Roman Amphitheatre, the fine sandy beaches, its warm light, the seafaring quarter, the green spaces to disconnect...

**All this and more awaits you in Tarragona,  
an exceptional destination.**



## A well-connected city

Tarragona, one of the four provincial capitals of Catalonia, boasts a privileged geographical location that allows it to be connected by land, sea and air with the rest of Spain, Europe and North Africa.

The **Camp de Tarragona high-speed train station**, just 10 minutes from the centre, is an important improvement in Tarragona's external connection and its link with the high-speed lines, bringing it quickly closer to Barcelona, Lleida, Zaragoza, Madrid (just two and a half hours away), Cordoba and Seville.

**How to get** to Tarragona.

# Why we are World Heritage

More than two thousand years of history separate Roman Tarraco from today's Tarragona. The millenary stones erected by the Roman Empire are a **World Heritage Site**, declared by UNESCO on 30 November 2000.

To embark on this **exciting journey back to the past**, the first step is to discover what Tarraco was like at the time of its greatest splendour, the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. This is possible thanks to the mapping and the 1:500 scale **model** located in the Pallol Vault (Pallol Square). Very close by, leaving through the Roser gateway, is the start of an Archaeological Walk along the **Walls** that protected the urban perimeter. Of its 3.5 km, 1.1 km (30%) are still in good condition. Three towers are still standing, including the Archbishop's Tower and the Minerva Tower, with the oldest Latin inscription on the peninsula.

The **Temple**, the place of worship, in what is now the Pla de la Seu, and in the cloister of the Cathedral there are remains of a portico. A stroll through the streets of the *Part Alta* (historic quarter) allows you to see parts of the Provincial Forum, such as those in Pallol Square, Rei Square and Fòrum Square.

Another must is the **National Archaeological Museum**, which since the 19<sup>th</sup> century has housed, among other things, valuable Roman remains, such as architectural fragments, sculptures, mosaics, ceramics and even a stretch of wall. It is currently under construction and its collection can be visited in shed 4 of the Moll de Costa, near the port.

The **Roman Circus**, with a capacity for 25,000 spectators, was the setting for the famous chariot races, including the four horse chariots, known as *quadrigae*, so often recreated in films. The monumental façade, the grandstands and, above all, the vaults, immerse the visitor in an authentic and exciting time warp.

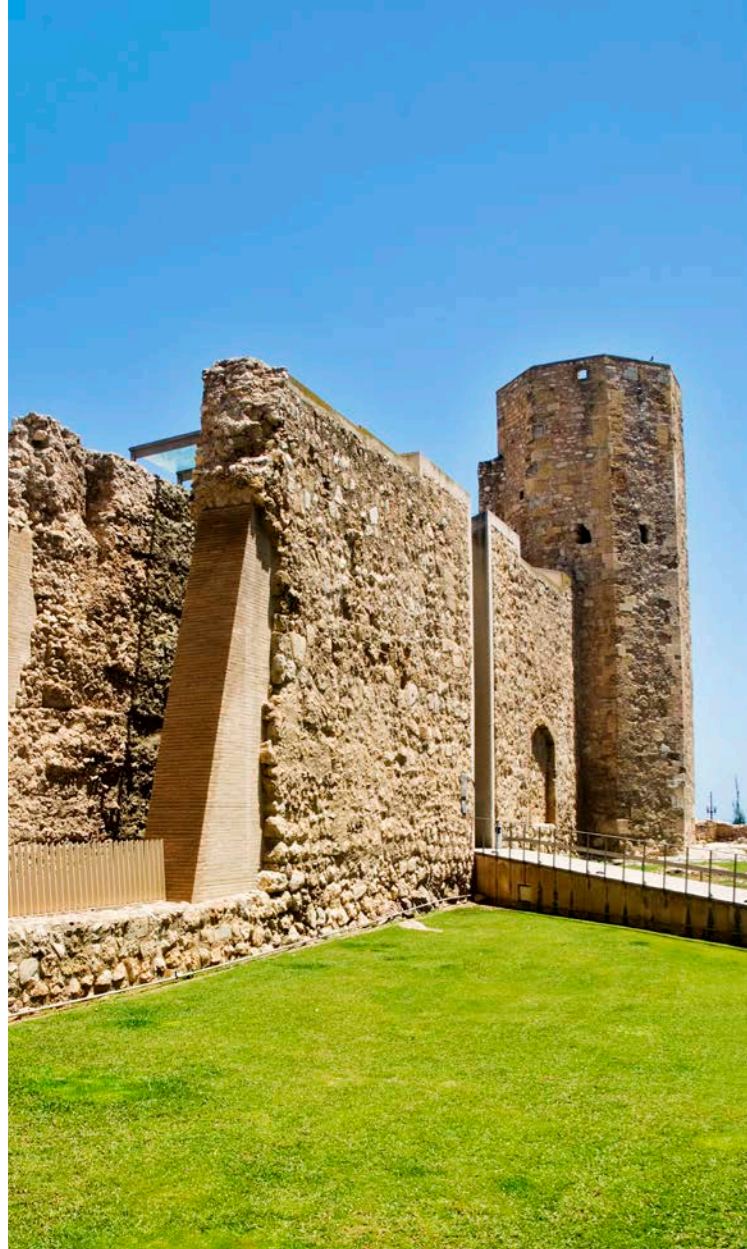
But, without a doubt, the great symbol of Roman Tarraco is the **Amphitheatre**, where some 14,000 spectators attended gladiatorial combats, fights with wild beasts and public executions. To sit on its eroded stands carved into the rock, with the Mediterranean breeze always present, is to soak up the purest essence of a thousand-year-old culture.



The archaeological urban tour is completed by the **Roman Theatre** and the **Local Forum**, the epicentre of civic life, of which the remains of the basilica and the columns have been preserved, as well as some ruins of its ancient streets. Almost on the outskirts are the **Paleo-Christian Museum and Necropolis** and the **Paleo-Christian Francolí Site**.

Finally, the majestic **Ferrerres Aqueduct**, known as the Devil's Bridge, 4 km from the city, illustrates the Roman engineering used to transfer water from the Francolí River to the city.

For further information, see **Museums, monuments** and the **Roman route**.



## Medieval and Art Nouveau Tarragona

The city was an important ecclesiastical enclave in medieval times, and magnificent examples of its religious and stately art have survived. From 1171 onwards, the churches of **Santa Maria del Miracle**, **Sant Pau** or **Santa Tecla la Vella** began to be built, as did the hospital for the care of the needy, the present-day **Praetorium tower** and the **Tarragona Cathedral**, never completed due to lack of funds, but which was consecrated in 1331 and is a must-see. Its magnitude and the richness of its interior make it a unique monument of its kind in Catalonia. The church began with a Romanesque plan and ended with the main façade in Gothic style. The bell tower, from where we have the best 360-degree view of the city, combines the Romanesque style at its base with the Gothic style in the rest of the body. The cloister has a rectangular floor plan. Its sculptural ensemble is one of the most remarkable examples of Romanesque art in Catalonia. It is also highly recommended to visit the **Diocesan Museum** and its important collection of tapestries.



In the **Pla de la Seu**, one of the areas that best reflects the mediaeval atmosphere, it is worth stopping in the porticoed **Merceria Street**, which formerly housed a vegetable market and currently hosts an antiques market on Sundays. Also take a stroll along Major Street, where the **former City Council building**, now the headquarters of **Tarragona Tourism Board**, is located.

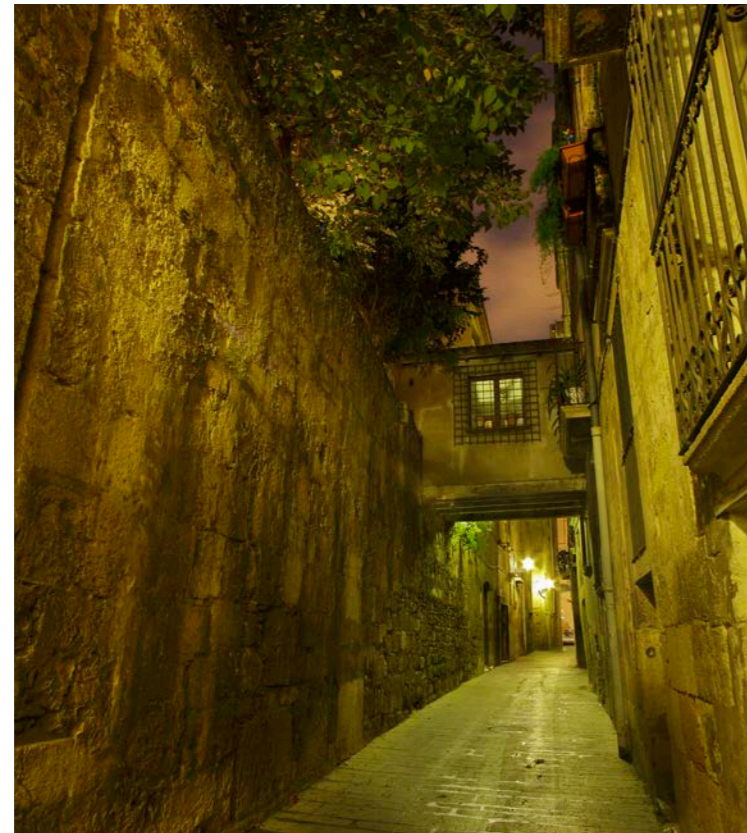
A visit to the **Metropol Theatre**, a true architectural jewel, is a must on the Modernist tour of Tarragona. Built in 1908, it is the work of the Tarragona architect Josep M. Jujol (1879-1949), a direct disciple of Antoni Gaudí. Gaudí left a marvellous piece in the city: part of the altar of the **sanctuary of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart**. The architect Domènech i Muntaner also left a record of his work with the **mausoleum of King Jaume I**. On their tour of the city, visitors will discover unique Art Nouveau buildings, especially on the Rambla Nova.

For more information on the medieval route, visit: [tarragonaturisme.cat/en/routes/mediaeval-route](https://tarragonaturisme.cat/en/routes/mediaeval-route)  
For more information on the Modernist route, visit: [tarragonaturisme.cat/en/routes/modernist-route](https://tarragonaturisme.cat/en/routes/modernist-route)

# Tarragona today

## The Part Alta

This is how the historic centre of Tarragona is known; from here, you can admire the best-preserved remains of the Roman Walls. The Cathedral, Major Street and Font Square, home to the Town Hall, are landmarks in a fascinating labyrinth of narrow streets that captivate the visitor with the magic of a past that comes to life in the present. Like the lively Fòrum Square, which is just as likely to host a market on Saturdays as it is to become a Sunday meeting point for enjoying a traditional vermouth. Unique shops and restaurants complete the area's offer.



## La Rambla and the modern districts

The heart of modern Tarragona beats in the very large Imperial Tarraco Square, the welcoming gateway for visitors arriving by road. The Rambla Nova is the most majestic walkway to the sea, which is reached after admiring the monument to the *Castells* (human towers), going round the Centenari fountain and observing the monument to the Heroes of 1811, defenders of the city against the French siege in the War of Independence.

The Rambla Nova is the prelude to the **Balcony of the Mediterranean**, from where you can admire the *Mare Nostrum* and *tocar ferro* (literally, "to touch iron", an expression that means to go to the Balcony) before crossing the Palmeres Promenade and starting the ascent to the *Part Alta* (historic quarter).



Part of this more modern area is the **Tarraco Arena**, a former 19<sup>th</sup> century bullring which today hosts major cultural events. The **Central Market**, the epicentre

of fresh and seasonal produce, and the **Rafael Puig i Valls Park**, one of the green lungs of the city, as well as the **Camp de Mart**, home to the Auditorium.

## El Serrallo

The **Serrallo** neighbourhood, distinguished by the Catalan Tourism Agency as a seafaring neighbourhood and located at the southern end of the port and next to the mouth of the Francolí River, was created in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and surrounds the fishing quay, with its old-fashioned boats. Its group of low houses with coloured façades, sheltered by tall palm trees, give it a very picturesque and photogenic air. The complex is complemented by the lively terraces of its restaurants, where you can taste the best fish and seafood and the typical cuisine of Tarragona with its signature dish, the *romesco*.

The fish market, where fish is auctioned every day, the old Fishermen's Corporation Building, which has been restored for cultural activities, and the unique 19<sup>th</sup> century church of Sant Pere, dedicated to the patron saint of fishermen, are some of its attractions, together with the important gastronomic offer.





## Natural heritage: beaches and other natural spaces

Fifteen kilometres of coastline, seven beaches and three coves, with four blue flags complete **Tarragona's beach offer**.

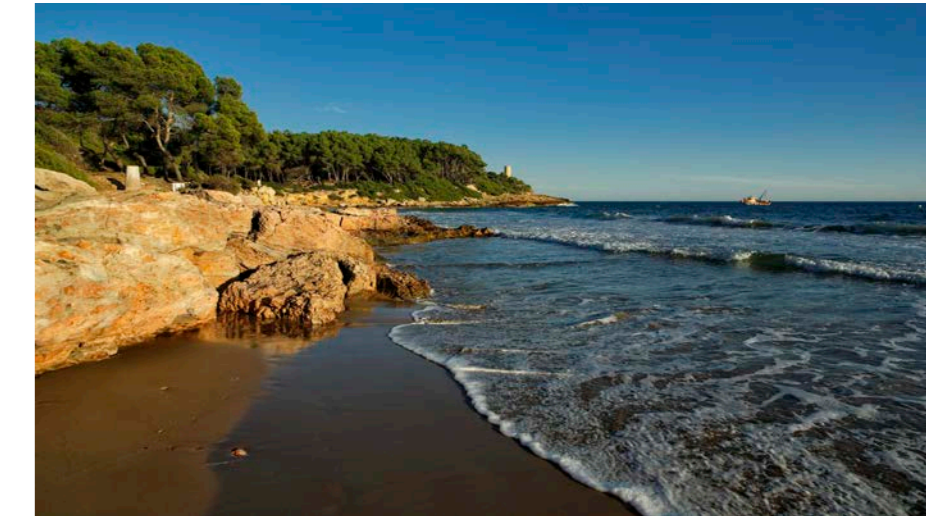
Without leaving the urban environment, visitors can enjoy two notable beaches with half a kilometre of fine sand and great width: the **Miracle Beach** - opposite the Amphitheatre - and the **Arrabassada Beach**, with a blue flag.

Continuing north we find two smaller beaches: **the Savinosa**, 350 metres long and with a blue flag, and **dels Capellans**, barely 60 metres long. Both are the prelude to Tarragona's great sandy beach, **Llarga Beach**, with its three kilometres of almost endless sand.



## An exciting route through the museums of Tarragona

The museums of Tarragona condense all the culture and history of a city. Tarragona offers a **cultural route through the museums of Tarragona**, places for cultural exchange, learning and emotional enjoyment. Here you can discover the history of Tarraco, the collections of religious art from medieval and modern times, stately homes, a tapestry by Joan Miró, the past of the port of Tarragona, the traditional festive *bestiari* (real or fantastic beasts), or the historical objects of the city's sports club.



Those looking for a little more privacy can opt for three cozy coves: **Arboçar Beach**, **Becs Beach** and **Jovera Cove**, surrounded by green groves. The latter separates the last two beaches of Tarragona, both with blue flags: **Móra** and **Tamarit**, which takes its name from a medieval village whose **11<sup>th</sup> century castle**, with Romanesque and Gothic elements, stands on a promontory creating a marvellous "postcard image".

The natural environment surrounding the city is ideal for hiking thanks to the 75 kilometres of signposted routes known as **Paths of Tarragona**. This is a road network that shows how the surrounding countryside and villages were connected; old cart tracks, bridle paths and trails that take us back to the origins of the municipality. The most complete is the **Anella Verda** (Green Ring), which links the mouths of the Francolí and Gaià Rivers for 34 kilometres and can be covered in sections, either on foot or by bicycle.



## Gastronomy: beyond *Romesco*

Without forgetting the vegetable garden, **Tarragona's cuisine** tastes unmistakably of the sea and is based on the Mediterranean diet, the second of its World Heritage Sites and recognised by UNESCO in 2013. Hence its star dish, the **romesco**, is made with ingredients from this diet: olive oil, roasted tomatoes, almonds, and toasted hazelnuts, among others. All this is used to make a cold sauce to accompany fish, vegetables, or meat, but it also gives its name to a stew: the *romesco* casserole.

The sea provides the cuisine with all kinds of seafood, the Tarragona red prawn and its fish, the Tarragona Oily Fish recognized by the Q for Food Quality stamp, which can be tasted in all its essence in the El Serrallo, the seafaring quarter of Tarragona. Rice in its different varieties and the tasty *fideus rossejats* (golden noodles) also play an important role in its gastronomy. The vegetable garden also produces a white, tender, elongated onion typical of this region, the *calçot*, which from January to April gives rise to the traditional *calçotades*, in which this roasted vegetable - seasoned with a variant of *romesco* sauce - is accompanied by a meat barbecue.

Finally, to accompany all these gastronomic delights, and in honour of its Roman roots, there is nothing better than the excellent wines of the Designation of Origin of Tarragona, including *misteles* and *rancis* wines, ideal for accompanying desserts. Different events contribute to highlighting Tarragona's gastronomy, such as **Tarraco a Taula** (May), as part of the *Tarraco Viva* Festival with dishes inspired by Roman recipes; the **DO Tarragona Wine Fair** (June), or the **Young Wine Festival, the Embutada**, and the **Gastronomic Romesco Days** in autumn.



## Festivals and *castells*: a passion for tradition and living history

In Tarragona, history transcends the stones, escapes from the books, and comes to life. The city has specialised in historical reconstruction activities. Archaeologists, historians, scriptwriters, narrators, and extras work hard to disseminate and share the history of the city and our classical civilisation in events such as the *Tarraco Viva* festival or the days dedicated to the Napoleonic war.

### **Tarraco Viva, Tarragona's Roman festival**

Tarragona, true to its motto of 'the city that best knows how to tell its history', demonstrates this in two historical re-enactment events. The most important of these is **Tarraco Viva**, which during the second half of May offers a fascinating journey back in time 19 centuries, turning the main monuments and spaces of the *Part Alta* (historic centre) into a stage showing what military and daily life was like in Roman Tarraco.

### **Tarragona 1800 historical dissemination days**

These **re-enactment days** are held in autumn and aim to disseminate the history and customs of contemporary **Tarragona** between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in an educational and cultural way, and to delve into the Napoleonic period, the Napoleonic Wars and the Siege of Tarragona in 1811.



## Tarragona, City of Castells

The last of the three UNESCO World Heritage Sites declared in 2010, the *castells* (human towers) are another of Tarragona's hallmarks. The city is home to **four groups**: **Xiquets de Tarragona**, **Colla Jove Xiquets de Tarragona**, **Xiquets del Serrallo** and **Colla Castellera Sant Pere i Sant Pau**. These human towers, a visual exemplification that unity is strength -*fem pinya!*- to reach the top, are an authentic spectacle that amazes visitors.

From June to September, Tarragona hosts several human towers events and every two years - in even years - its **Tarraco Arena** is the venue, in October, for the biggest show in the *casteller* world: the **Castells Contest**, in which the main groups from all over Catalonia compete.

In the summer, **Tarragona, City of Castells** is also held to raise awareness of the *castells* among the tourists who come to the city, with exhibitions in front of the Cathedral and open rehearsals on the premises of the groups.



## Tarragona moves 365 days a year

Tarragona offers visitors a **wide range of festivals** and celebrations, and the **cultural activities calendar** never stops. The **Three Kings' Cavalcade** in January; the **Carnival** in February-March; **Els Tres Tombs**, a tribute to the world of agriculture; the most important and multitudinous **Easter Week** in Catalonia, with the Procession of the Holy Burial on Good Friday; Tarraco Viva in May; the **International Fireworks Contest** in July; the **Sant Magí Patron Saint's Festival** in August; the great **Patron Santa Tecla Saint Festival** and the **International Theatre Festival**, in September; the **SCAN International Photography Festival**, held between October and December; the **Tarrorific** cultural festival, in November; the **REC International Film Festival** or the many activities organized during Christmas.





Tarragona is, in short, an open city that awaits the visitor, and about which the Roman Lucius Annaeus Florus wrote:

**“Of all the cities one can choose to rest, this is the most pleasant. It has good people, who do not welcome you at once, but who are very hospitable. The climate mixes and blends in a unique way all the seasons and the whole year seems like a constant spring”.**

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