



# THE CIRCUS

*The Formula 1  
of Ancient Times*



# THE BIGGEST SPECTACLE IN TARRACO USED TO BE THE CHARIOT RACES HELD AT THE CIRCUS

When you look at this space, try to imagine it as a huge elongated track with stands on both sides.

At one end were the starting gates or *carceres*, where the chariots emerged, and at the other a semi-circular *meta*, or turning point. It was at these turning points that the contestants experienced the most collisions or *naufragia* (literally, shipwrecks) due to their speed.

## KEY FIGURE

The Tarraco Circus was 325 metres long from the *meta*, where you are standing now, to the entrance to City Hall, at the other end of Plaça de la Font.

The Tarraco Circus had a capacity of around 25,000 people, twice as many as the Amphitheatre. The races involved horse-drawn chariots and could last a whole day.

The charioteers were famous and had their own groups of fans. There were also taverns inside the facility and stands where you could place bets. The Circus was the Formula 1 of ancient times!

The Tarraco Circus was very large but we cannot see it in its entirety today because over the centuries people took advantage of the material and the space to build houses and shops.

Fortunately, some of the most important parts of the site have been preserved, such as the ones you are about to see (the vaults, the entrances and the stands). For the rest, you will need to use your imagination!



Before entering, scan the QR code of the free Imageen Tarraco app, and you'll be able to see what the Circus was like and the space it occupied in the city.







## THE TEST

Visit the Circus and answer the following questions:

1. What was the name of the stone used to build the steps to get up to the visorium (the platform above the stands)?

- a. Granite
- b. Marble
- c. Santa Tecla

2. Tickets to the Circus were...

- a. Free
- b. Paid for
- c. Issued by a draw

3. Who could pass through the gate of St. Hermenegild?

- a. Chariots and people
- b. Only people
- c. Nobody, it was closed off

4. What was the purpose of the roof openings (now covered over) in the long vault?

- a. To collect rainwater
- b. To escape in the event of fire
- c. To let the light in

5. Where did the stairs still preserved at the end of the long vault lead?

- a. To the taverns
- b. To the stands
- c. To the exit



## FIND THE INTRUDER

In this drawing there is something that is not from Roman times. Let's see if you can find it!



## DRAW 'LA TECLETA'

Epigraphy means writing in stone. For example, the writing on the pedestals of statues to indicate the name of the person they represent. If you want to see an example, go to the Tecleta vault. This gallery was not part of the Circus, but was named in honour of the female marble sculpture displayed there. Since there was no inscription on it, she was popularly known as La Tecleta. Find the statue and do a drawing of it.



## FIND THE CHARIOTEERS

Find the names of the two charioteers who competed in the Tarraco Circus in this word search.

F E M S R I U O  
 F U S R R T A S  
 O T S L A O R F  
 P Y V C L P R T  
 D C E A U D E A  
 A H A L E S M T  
 M E A U R D Q A  
 L S E I Y E T P



## LINKING GAME

The Romans used to associate the chariot races, the enclosure itself and the people who took part in them with different natural elements and the calendar. Can you link them together?

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Arena                     | Months of the year and signs of the zodiac |
| Chariots                  | The Sun                                    |
| 7 laps of the track       | The Earth                                  |
| 4 colours of the teams    | Seasons of the year                        |
| 12 participating chariots | Days of the week                           |

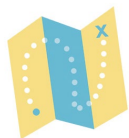


## CIRCLE THE COLOURS

The teams competing in the Circus were identified by four colours. Find out which they were and circle them.







# BEFORE YOU GO...

The visit will take you to the Praetorian Tower, which was built by the Romans and later became a medieval residence. It still houses treasures such as the sarcophagus of Hippolytus, which was recovered from the sea. Let's see if you can find it!

Afterwards, go up to the Gothic Room where there is a model of fifteenth century Tarragona. Look at it carefully and you'll discover what the city's residents used to do in the Circus arena in the Middle Ages.

Then climb up the spiral staircase to the roof of the tower. What you'll find there is truly spectacular: a 360° panoramic view of the city!

Can you identify the following buildings?

The stands on the northern side of the Circus (on Carrer de l'Enrajolat)

Tarragona City Hall

The Cathedral

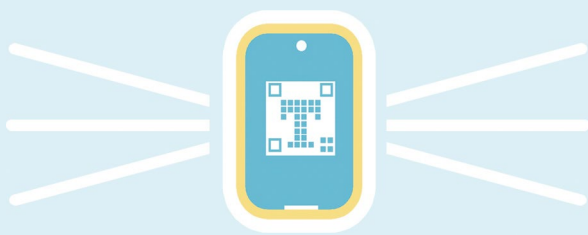
The old Jewish Quarter

The Queen's Fort

Miracle Beach

The Amphitheatre

The Morenes Tower



## TAKE A PHOTO AND SHARE IT

Take a photo of the Circus.

Afterwards, share it on the social media with the hashtag **#FamilyTarragona**

**Solutions:** Word search: Fuscus and Eutyches · Test: 1.c; 2.a; 3.a; 4.c; 5.b  
Circus symbology: Arena-Earth; Chariots-Sun; 7 laps of the track-7 days of the week; 4 colours of the teams-4 seasons of the year; 12 participating chariots-12 months of the year and 12 signs of the zodiac