



The Way of Saint James in Catalonia

From Le Perthus and Sant Pere de Rodes to Girona, Montserrat and Lleida, the Ways of Saint James run right across Catalonia, taking different routes towards Saragossa and the old Camino Francés (French Way), towards Jaca, Logroño and beyond. Whether on foot, by bicycle or on horseback, the pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle Saint James in Galicia is not only a spiritual journey of self-discovery, but also offers a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the wealth of natural, landscape and cultural heritage that lies along this "path of paths" as it takes us through Catalonia.



The monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes / Le monastère de Sant Pere de Rodes (Costa Brava)

A path from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic This path collects pilgrims travelling down from Europe via La Jonquera pass to El Port de la Selva, as well as carrying pilgrims from the iconic monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes, perched on the hills overlooking the sea at Cape Creus, one of the most important Medieval centres of pilgrimage in the West. From East to West over the Iberian peninsula: from Sant Pere [Saint Peter] to Santiago [Saint James].

Un chemin allant de la Méditerranée à l'Atlantique Cette voie jacquaire était empruntée par les pèlerins venant d'Europe par La Jonquera. Après une halte à El Port de la Selva, ils se rendaient au très impressionnant monastère de Sant Pere de Rodes, juché sur la montagne qui domine la mer au cap de Creus, qui fut lui aussi l'un des lieux de pèlerinage les plus importants d'Occident au Moyen Âge. De l'orient à l'occident de la péninsule Ibérique, de Sant Pere (Saint Pierre) à Saint-Jacques.



The city of Girona / Gérone (Costa Brava)

Girona Girona's outstanding sites – which include the Cathedral with its vast Gothic nave, the tomb of Saint Narcissus, the Carolingian city walls and the Jewish Quarter, or Call – form a rich monumental and cultural heritage and are located in what is one of the best-conserved medieval old towns in Europe. These attractions are complemented by the superb and varied Empordà county cuisine served at local restaurants. In short, visitors to Girona will find here all the charm of a leading European cultural capital, a city full of life and surprises.

Gérone La richesse architecturale et culturelle de Gérone en fait l'une des cités médiévales les mieux conservées d'Europe. Sont à voir absolument la cathédrale, dotée d'une nef gothique grandiose, la tombe de saint Narcisse, la muraille carolingienne et le vieux quartier juif. Le pèlerin découvrira en outre à Gérone tout le charme des villes culturelles européennes, toujours vivantes et surprenantes, et pourra aussi savourer les nombreux plats de l'excellente cuisine de l'Empordà.

Le chemin de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle en Catalogne

Depuis Le Perthus et Sant Pere de Rodes jusqu'à Gérone, Montserrat et Lleida, le chemin de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle traverse toute la Catalogne en différents itinéraires qui mènent à Saragosse et sur l'ancien Camino Francés (« chemin français ») vers Jaca et Logroño. Qu'on l'effectue à pied, à vélo ou à cheval, le pèlerinage jusqu'à la tombe de l'apôtre saint Jacques en Galice constitue d'abord une expérience de spiritualité et d'introspection. Mais c'est aussi l'occasion privilégiée de pouvoir admirer les trésors culturels et les superbes paysages qui parsèment ce « chemin de chemins » tout au long de sa traversée de la Catalogne.



Proclaimed First European Cultural Route in 1987 and catalogued as World Heritage by UNESCO in 1993, over the years the Ways of Saint James in Galicia, otherwise known as Routes of Santiago, have welcomed hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from around the world. These travellers seek the solitude of the path, a chance to think things over far from the frenetic rhythms of everyday life today. Now, reviving these age-old routes of medieval origin, Catalonia joins the great European cultural route at a highly significant moment: the 2010 Jubilee Year.

Classé « premier itinéraire culturel européen » en 1987 et inscrit par l'Unesco sur la liste du patrimoine de l'humanité en 1993, le chemin de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle voit défiler, année après année, des centaines de milliers de pèlerins venus du monde entier en quête, dans la solitude du voyage, d'un temps de réflexion les éloignant du rythme quotidien frénétique de la société actuelle. Après avoir réaménagé ces itinéraires millénaires d'origine médiévale, la Catalogne vient s'intégrer dans cette grande voie culturelle européenne, à une date aussi significative que l'année jubilaire 2010.



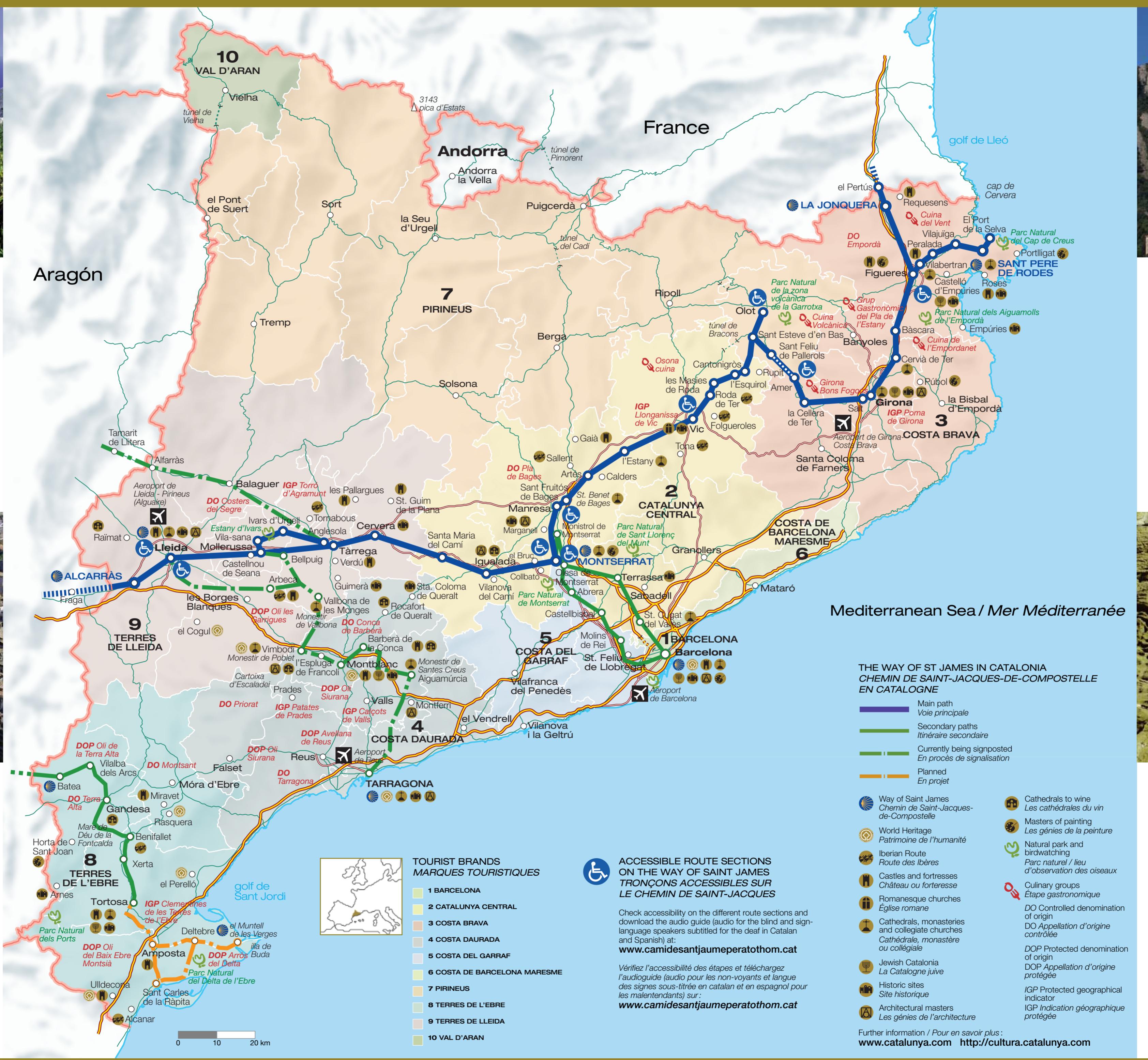
Montserrat: the mountain and the monastery / Le monastère et la montagne de Montserrat (Catalogne Centrale)

The spiritual centre: Montserrat This holy mountain, one of the most revered sites in Catalonia, is visited every year by thousands of tourists and pilgrims from all over the world. The singular nature of the mountain itself – declared a Natural Park – combined with the religious, spiritual and cultural significance embodied in the Sanctuary of La Mare de Déu de Montserrat, make this a site that no pilgrim can fail to visit as they set out on the Way of Saint James in Catalonia.

Le centre spirituel: Montserrat Montserrat, la montagne sacrée, est l'un des endroits les plus emblématiques de la Catalogne. Des milliers de visiteurs et de pèlerins venus du monde entier s'y rendent chaque année. Cette montagne unique, classée parc naturel, et le sanctuaire de la Vierge de Montserrat, haut lieu spirituel et culturel, sont, pour les pèlerins qui s'engagent sur le chemin de Saint-Jacques en Catalogne, une étape incontournable.



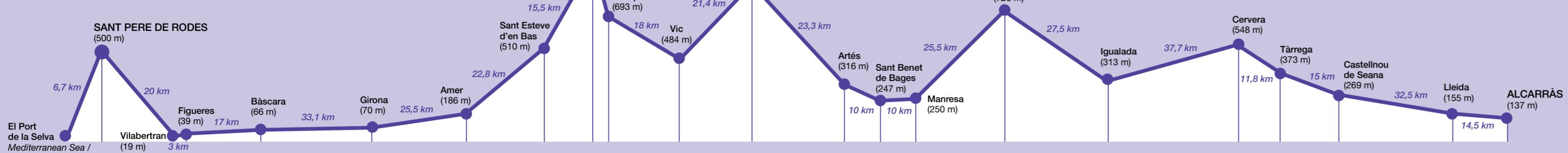
Belfry of La Seu Vella from the gate in the old city walls, Lleida / Le clocher de la Seu Vella vu de la porte percée dans les anciens remparts, à Lleida (Terres de Lleida)



Lleida Dominated by the splendid architectural site of the Old Cathedral, or Seu Vella, the capital of "la terra ferma" is the last Catalan city along the Way before we enter Aragon. Standing along the old Royal Way of Aragon, legacy of the Via Augusta Roman road, Lleida is home to deeply-rooted traditions of venerating Saint James, and is also the crossroads and meeting-point between nearly all the Catalan routes to Santiago. According to tradition, it was the Apostle James himself, fervently worshipped here, who evangelised the city.

Lleida Dominé par sa splendide cathédrale, dite la Seu Vella, la capitale de la « terre ferme » est la dernière ville catalane que le pèlerin trouve sur son chemin avant d'arriver en Aragon. Située sur l'ancien chemin royal vers l'Aragon, survivance de la Via Augusta romaine, Lleida arbore une riche tradition jacquaire, étant carrefour et point de ralliement de presque tous les itinéraires catalans qui rejoignent le chemin de Saint-Jacques. La tradition nous dit que ce fut l'apôtre lui-même, très vénéré à Lleida, qui évangélisa la ville.

Sant Pere de Rodes - Montserrat - Alcarràs



Catalonia is culture



Sant Pere de Rodes The Way of Saint James in Catalonia begins beside the sea, on the jetty of this seafaring town, El Port de la Selva, where a simple stone obelisk marks the starting-point. Here, then, is where a route commences that will take us from one sea to another, from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, from Cape Creus to Cape Finisterre. The distinguishing features of this seaside town, where traditional fishing activities live side by side with a thriving tourist industry, are its white houses and steep, winding roads. Enjoying the spectacular beauty of the Cap de Creus Natural Park, the pilgrim can take the coastal path to Sant Pere de Rodes, which leads up through the Santa Creu Valley to the monastery itself. Thanks to the Jubilee that Pope Urban II granted to Sant Pere de Rodes, this ancient Romanesque monastery, together with Santiago de Compostela, became one of the most important centres for pilgrimages in Western Europe. The origins of the abbey go back to the 10th century. The outstanding features include particularly: the church, with impressive barrel vault over the nave; the crypt, which housed the relics that made this site so greatly famed; the three-storey bell tower; and the cloister. Near the monastery are the ruins of the old village of Santa Creu de Rodes, closely linked to medieval pilgrimages, where we find the pre-Romanesque Church of Santa Helena de Rodes.



Monserrat This is, truly, Catalonia's most mythical mountain. Declared a Natural Park, Montserrat is also one of the most important spiritual centres in Europe. The monastery is richly steeped in traditions linked to Saint James, as exemplified in the magnificent *Llibre Vermell de Montserrat* [Red Book of Montserrat], a 14th-century manuscript containing songs and rituals used by pilgrims and testifying to the ancient origins of the different routes they took to Santiago. Besides the basilica, which houses the Romanesque statue of La Moreneta, the Black Madonna, patron saint of Catalonia, the monastery is also home to the *Escalaia*, one of the oldest children's choirs in Europe. Another important attraction is the Museum of Montserrat, which features works by such great artists as Caravaggio, El Greco, Rusiñol, Cases, Picasso and Dalí. Since the very earliest years in the tradition, Montserrat has always been an important stop along the Way to Santiago for all pilgrims passing through Catalonia.

Igualada

Founded in around the year 1000 CE on the left bank of the River Anoia, Igualada owes much of its early development to its position along the historic Royal Way from Barcelona to Lleida, which follows the old Roman road that joined Barcino [Barcelona] to Cesaraugusta [Saragossa]. Amongst the most important monuments here is the Gothic-Renaissance Basilica of Santa Maria, with its single nave enclosed by twelve side chapels. Adjoining the basilica is the oldest operating pharmacy in Europe, the Farmacia Bausil, established in the 15th century. On the city's outskirts, heading west, the pilgrim can enjoy the superb views from the Chapel of Sant Jaume Sesoliveres.

Cervera

Cervera The walls that stretch the length of the city to the east welcome pilgrims arriving along the GR route GR-171; entering Cervera along the old N-II motorway, the first monumental building the traveller finds is the former University. Next, you need to find Carrer Major, the street that forms the gateway to medieval Cervera. Here, the most outstanding sights include the Church of Santa Maria, its octagonal bell tower forming an unusual silhouette as it rises over the city, and the Paeria, or town hall building. Visitors to Cervera should also observe the stained-glass windows of the church, adorned with references to the Way of Saint James, and take a stroll around such narrow old streets as Sabater, Estudivell and Carrer de les Bruixes.

Tàrrega

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Girona

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Vic

Vic The city's origins go back to the historical Iberian-Roman settlement Ausa, and Vic today conserves a magnificent medieval town liberally sprinkled with buildings of outstanding artistic and architectural interest. The city grew up within a walled site containing the three elements that helped to shape it: the Cathedral of Sant Pere, presided over by the Romanesque bell tower, its lower section occupied by the magnificent Episcopal Museum; Montcada Castle, in the city heights, built around the Roman temple; and the Plaça del Mercadal, one of the most beautiful porticoed squares in Catalonia, as well as being the nerve-centre for both the city and the county as a whole. Moreover, one of the liveliest traditional markets in the country takes place in this huge square every Tuesday and Saturday.

L'Estartit

L'Estartit Located on the high plains of El Moianès, at 870 metres above sea level, this mountain village stands at one of the highest points along the Way of Saint James, near a small plain once occupied by a lake. This lake was drained during the Middle Ages, but forms once more during periods of heavy rainfall. The village itself grew up around the Romanesque Monastery of L'Estartit, catalogued as a national monument in 1931. The harmonious monumental site, which dates back to the 12th century, is formed by the austere Church of Santa Maria, the cloister and several adjoining buildings, which house a small museum.

Manresa

Manresa After passing the Monastery of Sant Benet de Bages, the Way reaches Manresa, a historic industrial city situated at the very heart of Catalonia, halfway to everywhere. Here, the Way of Saint James coincides with that of Abbot Oliba, and is also an essential point on the European Route of St Ignatius. The architectural heritage in Manresa ranges from medieval buildings and Baroque mansions to Art Nouveau factories and palaces, whilst the outstanding attractions also include the Gothic Basilica of Santa Maria de la Seu, the Baroque Cave of St Ignatius site and the old town, with Plaça de Sant Domènec and L'Agulla Park, commanding magnificent views over the mountains of Montserrat.



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Alcarràs

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Lebensraum

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