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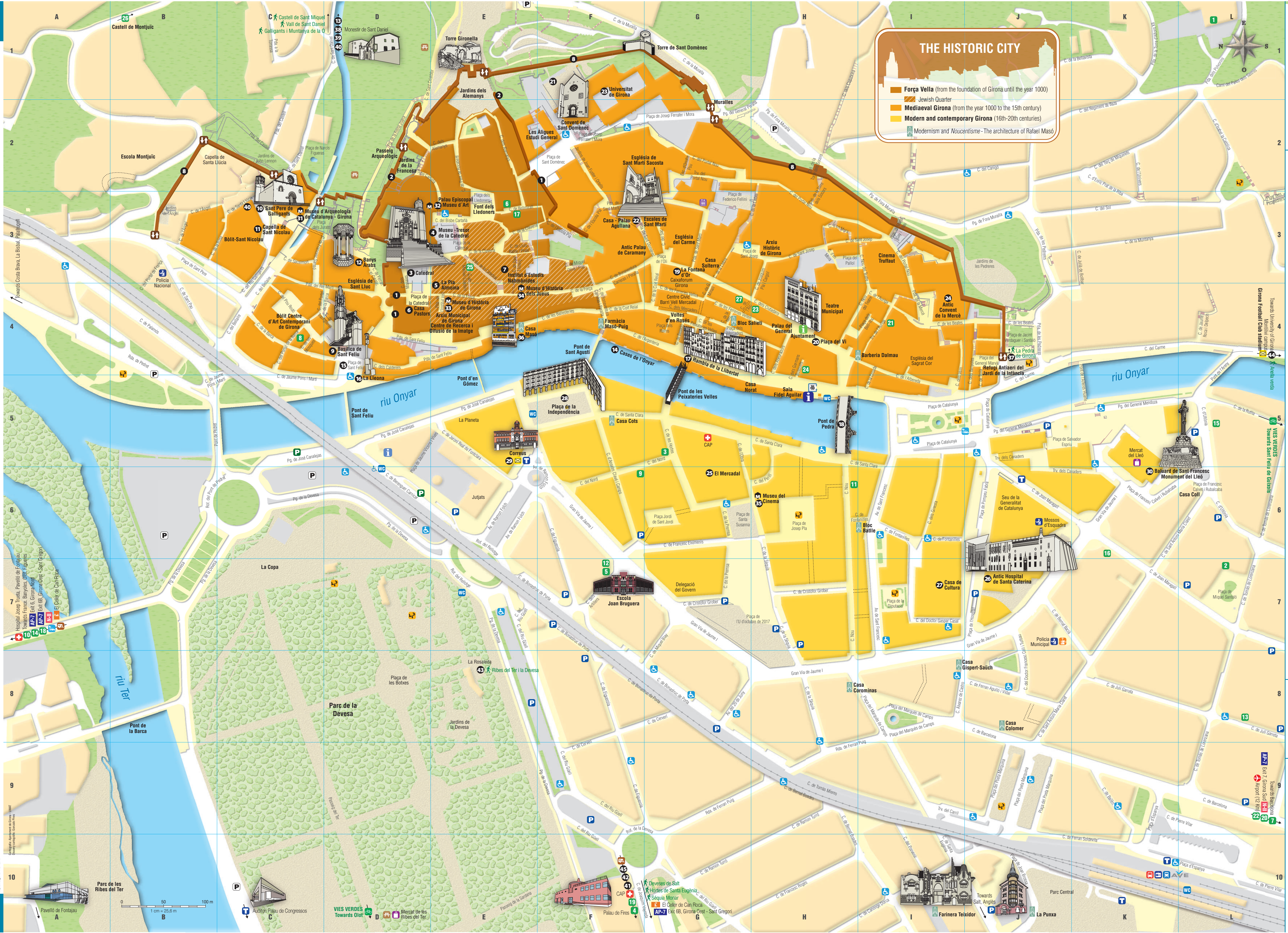
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Art Museum - (34) 972 203 834  
Girona History Museum - (34) 972 222 229  
Jewish History Museum - (34) 972 216 761  
Cinema Museum - (34) 972 412 777  
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## GIRONA, A EUROPEAN CITY

The two-thousand year old city of Girona has an extraordinary capacity to attract visitors due to its privileged location, its long history, and its many art treasures, as well as its lively cultural, commercial, and industrial activity. The large, notably well conserved city centre boasts numerous historic buildings, making it one of the most interesting in Catalonia. Girona evolved out of two fortified enclosures, the original Roman foundation known as **Força Vella** and the **Mediaeval Quarter** that grew up when the city walls were extended during the 14th and 15th centuries.

Girona invites visitors to journey through over two thousand years of history, from its Roman origins to the **Modern Period** and on to the **contemporary city**, taking in some exuberant Baroque spaces and Rafael Masó's Noucentisme-style buildings on the way. Finally, **green Girona** includes two urban parks (La Devesa and Parc del Migdia) and a surrounding area of remarkable beauty, in particular the valley of Sant Daniel, the foothills of the Gavarres Massif, and the banks of the River Ter.

### THE HISTORIC CITY

#### FORÇA VELLA. From the foundation of Girona until the year 1000

In the first century BC, the Romans built a powerful fortress enclosed within a triangular perimeter, like an acropolis, known as the **Força Vella**. The fortress was well protected by a defensive wall made of large sandstone ashlars. Parts of this first city enclosure can still be seen today on some stretches of the wall.

#### ROMAN WALLS ❶

The original sandstone Roman walls dating from the 1st century BC are still visible today at Plaça de Sant Felú, Sobreportes and Ruffi city gates, and Gironella tower. In the 3rd century AD, the walls were restored with regular-shaped limestone ashlars, as can be seen at the Telégraf tower.

#### CAROLINGIAN WALLS ❷

The Roman walls were extended after the year 1000, when the city began to grow beyond the **Força Vella** enclosure. A stroll along the ramparts enables visitors to follow the longest Carolingian walls (9th century) in Europe.

#### CATHEDRAL

**The Cathedral.** ❸ Built between the 11th and 18th centuries, the Cathedral is the result of a series of additions and superimpositions in different styles, ranging from Romanesque to Neo-classical. The most singular feature is the 23-metre wide Gothic nave (15th-16th centuries), the widest rib-vaulted space in the world. Other noteworthy features include the Romanesque tower and cloister (11th-12th centuries), and the Baroque façade and steps (17th-18th centuries). Inside the Cathedral, there is a notable set of Gothic objects (altar stone and bishop's seat), Gothic objects (silver-gilt canopy and altarpiece, tombs of Countess Ermessenda and Bishop Berenguer d'Anglesola), as well as two Baroque altarpieces (the Immaculate Conception and the Annunciation).

#### Cathedral Treasury-Museum. ❹

It houses works of religious art: the *Beatus codex* (10th century), the famous *Creation Tapestry* (12th century), a valuable collection of Gothic silverware, and the Renaissance altarpiece of St Helena (16th century).

#### Pia Almoïna. ❺

The 14th-century façade of this almshouse founded in the 13th century, the most impressive example of civil Gothic architecture in Girona, frames the monumental space of the Cathedral steps.

**Casa Pastors.** ❻ This 18th-century house is one of the city's most notable mansions, with a porticoed courtyard, wide staircase, and noble reception rooms on the first floor.

#### JEWISH QUARTER ❶

Girona's Jewish Quarter, documented from the year 1160, is one of the best conserved in Europe. Between the 13th and 14th centuries, there were synagogues, ritual baths, schools, and hospitals built for the use of the Jewish community, which at its highest point reached over eight hundred members. The **Jewish History Museum** recalls the history of the Jewish communities in Catalonia in the Middle Ages, with particular emphasis on Girona, and displays a collection of mediaeval Hebrew tombstones from the former Jewish cemetery in Montjuïc. **Nahmanides Institute for Jewish Studies** is a research centre on Jewish culture and history, with a library holding over six thousand publications.

### GASTRONOMY

Girona city is known for the outstanding vitality of its cuisine, characterized by a combination of **traditional** and **avant-garde dishes**, based on the use of **local produce** and time-honoured recipes. The city has many restaurants offering a wide range of fare: Catalan, Mediterranean, market, signature cuisine, and much more. Girona gastronomy has now become an international model of quality, with **Michello-starred** restaurants that include El Celler de Can Roca, proclaimed by the prestigious *Restaurant Magazine* as the **second Best restaurant in the World!**

**El Lleó marketplace** is the city's major distribution centre for fresh quality produce. With 60 stalls selling meat, fish, fruit and vegetables, groceries, etc., the market supplies the local restaurants, and is a daily meeting place for the citizens of Girona.

### MEDIAEVAL GIRONA. From the year 1000 to the 15th century

The mediaeval city expanded between the 11th and the 15th centuries, with the boroughs that grew up to the north (Sant Felú and Sant Pere), south (Areny and Vilanova) and west (Mercadal) of the original Força Vella enclosure, protected by new defensive walls, parts of which can still be seen from the rampart walk. Girona's moment of greatest vitality was the mid-14th century when, with a population of about twelve thousand inhabitants, it became the second largest city in Catalonia.

#### MEDIAEVAL CITY WALLS ❸

The rampart walk affords privileged views over the city and enables visitors to follow the mediaeval city walls (14th-15th centuries) that protected the new boroughs of Sant Felú and Sant Pere, Vilanova and Areny, and Mercadal.

#### BOROUGHS NORTH OF THE CITY

The presence of the cemetery and the tomb of St Felú to the north of the Força Vella enclosure propitiated the growth of an *extra-muros* suburb from the 4th century AD onwards. Later on, a new borough grew up in the shelter of the monastery of **Sant Pere de Galligants** (11th-12th centuries), with the Romanesque buildings of the monastery and the chapel of Sant Nicolau as the main points of interest.

**Basilica of Sant Felú.** ❹ Girona's first cathedral (until the 10th century) is one of the city's most representative Gothic buildings, mainly because of its slender bell tower (14th-16th centuries). The original Romanesque chevet was later completed with Gothic naves and a Baroque façade (13th-18th centuries). It houses remarkable works of art, including eight pagan and early Christian sarcophagi (4th century), the sepulchre of St Narcissus (14th century) by Jean de Tournai, and the Recumbent Christ (14th century) by master sculptor Aloï de Montbrai.

**Sant Pere de Galligants.** ❺ This Benedictine monastery (12th century), with its grandiose basilica-plan church and interesting iconographical capitals in the central nave and cloister, is one of the major Lombard Romanesque sites in Catalonia, together with the nearby chapel of Sant Nicolau.

**Chapel of Sant Nicolau.** ❶ This small funerary chapel originally had a Lombard-type ground plan with four apses, and the characteristic ornamentation of small blind arches and Lombard bands on the outer walls. A noteworthy feature is the octagonal *cimborio*. One apse was lost on the addition of the nave, which was completely renovated in the 20th century. Sant Nicolau is now used as an exhibition space.

**Arab Baths.** ❷ A singular Romanesque building (12th century) based on the model of ancient Roman baths. The most outstanding features include the annular-vaulted entrance, used as a changing room and rest area, and the dome over the central pool, supported by slender columns with ornately decorated capitals.

**Valley and monastery of Sant Daniel.** ❷ Behind Sant Pere de Galligants lies the valley of Sant Daniel, a large green zone near the city. The monastery church, housing the tomb of St Daniel (14th century) by master sculptor Aloï de Montbrai, and cloister (12th-15th centuries) are fine examples of the Romanesque style with Gothic additions.

#### THE ARENY BOROUGH AND THE MEDIAEVAL EXPANSION

In the Middle Ages, the city expanded towards the River Onyar, where the Areny borough evolved from the commercial opportunities afforded by the river banks and the protection of a nearby religious building. The parallel growth of the Mercadal borough on the other side of the river was consolidated with the development of artisan industries using hydraulic energy from the Monar Canal. The city was thus encircled by two boroughs, one on either side of the River Onyar, linked by a single stone bridge called St Francesc Bridge.

#### The houses on the River Onyar. ❶

The city offers spectacular images of steep streets and porticoed squares and, above all, the brightly painted façades of the houses overlooking the River Onyar (the river that crosses the city centre), which together with the Cathedral and Sant Felú in the background provide the most emblematic view of Girona. Of particular interest among the bridges spanning the river are the slender, lightweight Gómez Bridge (1916), Peixaterres Vells Bridge (built by the Eiffel company in 1877), and the "Stone Bridge", also known as Isabel II Bridge (1856).

### SHOPPING

In Girona you will find all kinds of shops, ranging from **traditional stores** to **fashion boutiques**: prestigious international brands, avant-garde decoration, signature jewellery, crafts, antiques, delicatessen products and much more.

The **main business district**, where most of the Girona's shops and leisure centres are concentrated, runs from Carrer de la Barca in the historic centre right over to Carrer Emili Grahí in the more modern part of the city.

The **Ribes del Ter open-air market** is held every Tuesday and Saturday morning in Devesa Park, along the banks of the River Ter, with some 200 stalls selling fruit, vegetables, clothes, footwear, accessories, toiletries, and many other products. The many **fairs** and **street markets** (food, flowers, bric-à-brac, art, painting) add to the attractions for visitors to the city.

#### PLAÇA DE SANT FELIU 1❶

Plaça de Sant Felú is the main visitor access to the Força Vella on crossing the river by either Gómez Bridge or the new Sant Felú Bridge. This bustling square, with many bars and restaurants and the ever-popular Lloness sculpture, offers the most spectacular view of the bell tower of Sant Felú basilica.

**Sant Felú bell tower.** The bell tower is a distinctive feature of the city skyline, together with the Cathedral. Designed by architect Pere Sacoma as a combined defence tower and bell tower, it was completed in the 16th century in its original Gothic style.

**Façade of Sant Felú.** Construction of the basilica of Sant Felú was started around the year 1200, but was not completed until the early 17th century. Master stonemason Felip Regí built the remarkable Baroque façade, which resembles an altarpiece framed by the flanking Gothic towers, in the manner of Italian architect and scholar Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola.

**The Lloness.** 1❶ Copy of the 12th-century original piece housed in the Art Museum, the sculpture represents a lioness climbing up a column with the tail wrapped around it and the head turned to one side. According to tradition, to become a good citizen of Girona or (in the case of visitors) to return to the city, one must touch or kiss the animal's backside.

#### RAMBLA DE LA LLIBERTAT 1❷

Today's Rambla was developed as a marketplace in the 13th century, as witnessed by its original name of *Rambla de les Cois* (Cabbage Walk). Situated along the River Onyar, with its characteristic porticoed arcades with irregularly shaped, low arches, has been the main commerce and leisure area of Girona for centuries. Of particular interest are the Modernist façade of Casa Norat (1912) and the Noucentisme-style Municipal Art galleries (1928). Other mediaeval porticoed spaces can be seen in Carrer de les Ferreries Vells, Plaça del Vi and Plaça de les Voltes d'en Rosés.

**Pont de Pedra.** 1❷ The "Stone Bridge", also called Isabel II Bridge, was built in 1856 to replace the former Gothic-style St Francesc Bridge spanning the River Onyar. A cattle market used to be held on the riverbed until the first decades of the 20th century.

**Fontana d'Or.** 1❸ Exceptional example in Catalonia of Romanesque civil architecture with Gothic additions, now hosting CaixaForum Girona.

**PLAÇA DEL VI 1❸** This bustling square is surrounded by porticoed arcades. Girona City Hall, the Municipal Theatre, and the so-called *Palau del General*, a Gothic-Renaissance building that housed the Catalan government administration of the Girona region in the 16th and 17th centuries.

#### VILANOVA BOROUGH 1❹

The Vilanova borough grew up in the 14th century, behind the monastery of Sant Domènec, the oldest of its kind in Catalonia. Large stretches of the mediaeval walls can still be seen here.

#### SANT MARTÍ SACOSTA 1❺

Girona has succeeded in preserving many mediaeval and modern spaces, such as squares, buildings and steep alleys of exceptional beauty and atmosphere. This is certainly true of the space enclosed by the church of the former **monastery of Sant Martí** (17th century) with its Baroque façade and steps, and **Casa-Palau Agullana** (16th-17th centuries) with its covered skew arch that provides one of the city's most emblematic images.

**Art Museum.** 1❷ This museum houses a valuable collection of art from the Girona area. The permanent collection of Romanesque and Gothic art makes it the third most important museum of its kind in Catalonia.

**Girona History Museum.** 1❸ Located in a former Capuchin monastery (18th century), of which the cloister, cistern, and curious *desiccatòr* cemetery can still be seen, this museum tells the story of Girona city from its foundation by the Romans (1st century BC) to the return of democracy from 1975 onwards. There are also several themed spaces, such as the Sardana Room.

**Jewish History Museum.** 1❹ This museum tells the story of Catalonia's mediaeval Jewish communities, with particular emphasis on Girona. The unique collection of mediaeval Hebrew tombstones from the former Jewish cemetery of Montjuïc is of notable interest.

#### Cinema Museum. 1❺

Located in the former Casa de les Aigües ("Water House"), this museum houses Tomás Mallol's collection of pre-cinema items, ranging from the moving images of shadow theatre to today's cinema.

#### Casa Masó. 1❻

Family home of architect Rafael Masó (1880-1935) and one of his most important architectural works. This is the only one of the famous houses overlooking the River Onyar that is open to the public.

### CONGRESSES AND BUSINESS

Girona is a well-positioned city, in terms of both infrastructure and geographical location, for holding congresses, conferences, and business or incentive meetings. Venues suitable for all types of event include **Girona Conference Centre** with three large halls holding over 1800 persons, and Girona Trade Fair Building, a large adjacent space of over 7000 m<sup>2</sup>.

The city also boasts many **unique event venues**, such as La Mercè Cultural Centre, Casa Masó, the courtyard of the Jewish History Museum and the Events Room of the Municipal Theatre, among others.

**Parc del Migdia.** Located on the site of a former military barracks in the south of the city, this is a popular urban-style park with botanical interest.

### MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY GIRONA

#### MERCADAL BOROUGH 1❷

Water from the Monar Canal running through the Mercadal had been used for centuries before the borough was walled in the 15th century. Several convents and monasteries (Sant Francesc, Santa Clara, Sant Agustí) were built here, but demolished in the 19th century to make way for industrial establishments, no longer existing today.

**Former hospital of Santa Caterina** (17th century). 1❷ Now the seat of the Catalan Government in Girona, this Baroque building was renovated in 1928, and remodelled during the first decade of the present century. The old pharmacy, restored in 2011, is conserved with a collection of over 350 French-style ceramic objects, glass jars, mortars, and surgical instruments.

**Casa de Cultura.** 1❸ The former hospice (18th century), is a good example of Neo-Classical sobriety, with the exception of the Rococo-style doorway. The chapel is now the Josep Vidiell Concert Hall.

#### Plaça de la Independència. 1❹

The porticoed neo-classical square is now a bustling place with many popular restaurants. The monument (1894) entitled *Girona 1809*, dedicated to the defenders of the city, is by sculptor Antonio Parera.

**Post Office.** 1❺ Designed in 1916-20, the main point of interest is its façade, with the grandiose entrance built in the style of a triumphal arch, crowned by a Noucentisme-style ceramic dome.

#### "The Lion". 1❻

Nickname for the monument *The Army to the Heroes of 1808 and 1809* in honour of the defenders of Girona during the Peninsular War. The bastion of Sant Francesc (17th century) provides the base for the column and the lion, both made by sculptor Joan Oliver de Bezi. The three bas-reliefs dedicated to the militia and the artillerymen are by sculptor Josep Campeny, commissioned in 1909 to commemorate the centenary of the monument.

#### WORKS BY RAFAEL MASÓ

Rafael Masó was the main architect working with the Noucentisme style in the Girona area, and several of these works can still be seen in the city. Recently opened to the public, **Casa Masó** (1911-12) was originally the architect's family home and now houses the Masó Foundation. **Casa Sallati** (1911) was a Gothic mansion renovated by Masó with the addition of new features such as wrought ironwork and leaded stained glass windows. Masó's most outstanding works are the **Farinera Teixidor** (1910-11), Girona's most notable Modernist building featuring glazed ceramic tiles, and **Casa Teixidor**, also known as **La Punxa** (1918-22), for which the architect used a more personal style.

### GIRONA MUSEUMS

**Archaeology Museum of Catalonia-Girona.** 1❸ Founded in 1846, it houses archaeological finds from excavations in the Girona area, from prehistory up to the mediaeval period, with particular emphasis on Empúries and the city of Girona.

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### CITY PARKS

**Devesa.** Dating back to mediaeval times, this park is now the largest in Girona. Sports facilities, the Trade Fair building, the Auditorium-Conference Centre, an open-air market on Tuesday and Saturday mornings, as well as stalls and attractions during St Narcissus' Fair and Festival at the end of October.

**Ribes del Ter.** Linear park along the banks of the River Ter, running from the Fontajau district to Pont Major, this is a good place for relaxing, strolling, and observing the rich riverside fauna. The Fontajau sports pavilion area hosts many different sporting, leisure and cultural events.

**Parc del Migdia.** Located on the site of a former military barracks in the south of the city, this is a popular urban-style park with botanical interest.

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Girona is a privileged city in terms of natural heritage. It offers an unbeatable setting for enjoying all types of outdoor sports and activities, always just a stone's throw from the historic quarter. In fact, more than 60% of the city's municipal territory is classified as protected space; of particular interest among these areas are the sections along the banks of the River Ter and the Gavarres Massif, both protected by Catalan law and the EU Natura 2000 Network.

A wide range of nature routes have been created throughout the city, allowing the rich diversity of Girona's landscapes to be discovered and enjoyed.

**The Stone Route 37** close to the historic quarter, to discover Girona's old quarries.

**Routes around Sant Daniel 38 Sant Miquel 39** the River Galligants and the Hill of O 40. In the valley of Saint Daniel and the Gavarres Massif, the green lung of the city.

**Routes through the Hortes de Santa Eugènia** agricultural area and the **Deveses de Salt** nature area (41 and 42, accessible routes).

**Ribes del Ter and Devesa 43** Girona's two large urban parks (accessible route).

**Green Loop 44** passing through the municipality from south to north along the eastern edge of the city.

The route traces the **Monar irrigation channel 45** a way of delving into Girona's industrial heritage.

Leaflets and more detailed information about all of these routes are available from the Tourist Office.

## GIRONA ALL YEAR ROUND

**Parade of the Three Kings (5 January).** The Three Kings travel from the Orient to the city of Girona and set up their tents in Les Pedreres Gardens. Their Majesties then ride through the streets of the city, escorted by a spectacular entourage.

**Girona10 (January).** For one weekend in January, city hotels and restaurants offer accommodation and gastronomic menus for €10. Special promotions for cultural events, shopping, leisure, etc.

**Girona Gastronomy Week (March).** Restaurants from Gironès, Pla de l'Estany and La Selva counties take part in this gastronomy campaign, with special menus offering the best of Girona cuisine.

**Holy Week (March/April).** Traditions and popular events: procession of the Burial of Christ, featuring legions of Ancient Roman soldiers (*manies*), Palm Sunday market and blessing of palm branches in the Cathedral.

**St George's Day (23 April).** Roses, bookstalls and crowds of people thronging the streets of Girona mark this popular festival as a special day in Catalonia.

**Girona, Flower Time (May).** Hugely popular flower exhibition that turns the city's historical buildings, courtyards, and urban spaces into spectacular ornamental gardens.

**Summer events (July, August and September).** Concerts and musical performances, dance, theatre, children's events, guided visits and many other activities.

**St Narcissus' Fair and Festival (October).** Girona's annual festival includes a trade fair, fun fair, musical performances, street fairs and markets, popular festivities, a parade of "giants", a street firework festival (*coirefoc*) and much more.

**Gastronomy Forum (November).** Every two years, Girona hosts an international gastronomy congress, which includes a trade fair, demonstrations, and multidisciplinary activities for catering professionals and lovers of good food alike.

**Temporada Alta – Autumn Festival of Catalonia (October, November and December).** Drama festival offering a programme of national and international prestige, now a benchmark among events of its kind in Europe.

**Christmas (December).** Shopping, Christmas lights, markets, shows, the traditional Nativity play ("Pastorets"), and many other activities.

**Girona, a city of festivals (all year round).** Music, cinema, theatre and visual arts festivals including jazz, street art, classical guitar, video-art, international and amateur theatre, etc.

## SPORTS TOURISM DESTINATION

The Catalan Tourist Board has listed Girona as a Sports Tourism Destination (DTE), an award that recognises the city as a destination offering high-quality resources and services. Sports facilities, specialised accommodation and services for both professional sportspersons and tourists wishing to practice sports during their visit.

Girona is a certified Sports Tourism Destination in the "MultiSports" category, which includes running, cycling (road and ATB), swimming, athletics, and tennis.

