

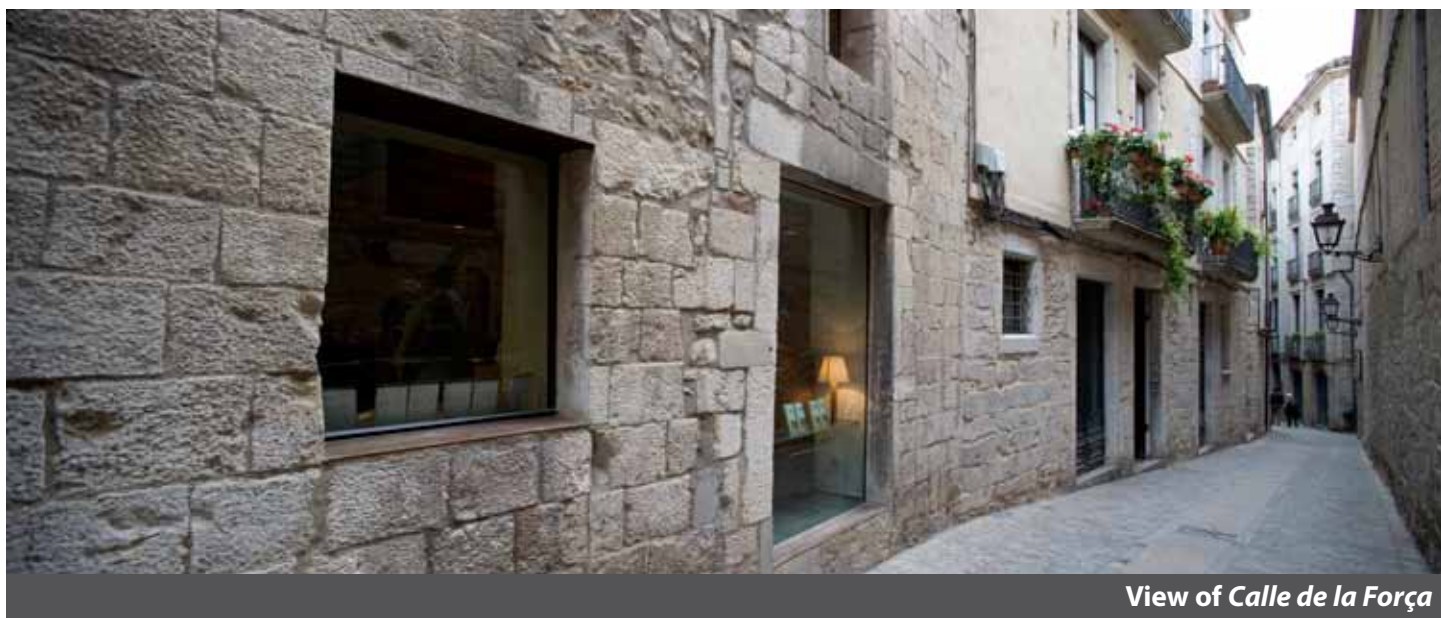
TRAVEL GUIDES

Girona Jewish Quarter



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INTRODUCTION

To visit Girona's *Call Jueu*, the old Jewish Quarter, is not simply to step back into the Middle Ages in one of the most distinctive cities of Spain. It is also the chance to plunge into the mystery of the intricate and labyrinthine district, crisscrossed by winding streets and narrow flights of stone steps that echo with history. This guide is intended to help you appreciate the major landmarks of this mythical place, erstwhile home of kabbalists and great Jewish sages such as Nachmanides, the mystical scholar and physician.

WHEN TO VISIT

Year round, Girona bustles with cultural events and activity, so it is never difficult to find a reason to visit the city whatever the season. During the summer, however, especially during August, the Jewish Quarter is at its most active, with guided tours, activities and lots of music. The celebration of the European Day of Jewish Culture, held during the first weekend in September, is another great excuse for a trip.

August

Nights of Music in *El Call*

Sounds from the past. On Thursday nights in August, the beautiful *Patio de la Estrella* - the "courtyard of the star" at the Bonastruc ça Porta Centre - puts on its party dress to host the

concert series "Nights of Music in *El Call*". Through Sephardic, Hispanic Jewish and Medieval music, the area comes alive again with the sounds of centuries past when this was the district where the Jewish people of the city lived.



"Nights of Music in *El Call*", *Patio de la Estrella*, Bonastruc ça Porta Centre



Children's storytelling session at the Bonastruc ça Porta Centre

July and August

Children's Activities

Theatre, puppet shows and storytelling are just some of the children's activities offered every Wednesday throughout July and August around the Museum of Jewish History. A fun way to introduce the kids to the fascinating history of Girona's *Call Jueu*.

September

European Day of Jewish Culture

Every year, on the first weekend in September, the European Day of Jewish Culture is celebrated to the full in Girona's Jewish Quarter. The focus is an open day, accompanied by musical performances, guided tours, round-table panel discussions, lectures, exhibitions and films.

Tourist Information

- **Girona Tourist Office.**

Rambla de la Llibertat 1.
Phone: +34 972 22 65 75.
Web: www.ajuntament.gi/turisme

- **Bonastruc ça Porta Centre.**

Calle de la Força, 8.
Phone: +34 972 21 67 61.
Web: www.ajuntament.gi/call

Other dates of interest

February

Carnival parades.

March/April

Holy Week (Good Friday: Holy Burial Procession); Girona Gastronomy Week.

April

San Jordi - Saint George's Day - (23rd); Spring Festival, includes processions and reference to the legendary medieval character Tarla.

May

Flower Festival: floral decorations on and around some of Girona's main monuments and attractions.

June

Nit de Sant Joan - midsummer night bonfires (23rd).

June/July

Girona Festival of Religious and World Music (Locations include: Palau de Congressos, Auditori de la Merce, Cathedral cloister...).

August

"Nights of Music in *El Call*" concert series.

September

European Day of Jewish Culture (first weekend of the month).

October

Festival of Saint Narcis, the city's patron saint.

November

High season: Autumn Festival of Performing Arts (from September until December).

CHOOSE YOUR HOTEL

Modern, designer hotels, classical and historical hotels, some set right in the heart of the *barri vell* (the old quarter), in Girona you'll always find good quality and service. Choose whichever takes your fancy as the perfect stepping off point for an unforgettable visit to the city's Jewish Quarter.

AC Palau de Bellavista *****

Near the old quarter, its modern architecture and magnificent views of the city are major attractions, especially in combination with its first class service and facilities. The Numun restaurant, run by the Roca brothers, is another great attraction.

Address: Pujada de Polvorins, 1.
Phone: +34 872 08 06 70.
Price: from 130 € double.
Web: www.ac-hotels.com

Hotel Carlemany ****

Its cutting-edge architecture, which houses a good collection of modern art, is symbolic of the new Girona, which exists in perfect harmony with the city's historical past. Popular business hotel. Home to the restaurant El Pati Verd.

Address: Plaça Miquel Santalo, s/n.
Phone: +34 972 21 12 12.
Price: from 116 € double.
Web: www.carlemany.es



Room at the Palau de Bellavista

Hotel Historic ****

Set in the heart of the Jewish Quarter, on the site of a ninth century building, and alongside the Cathedral, this hotel combines traditional rustic style with its own personal design. Perfectly integrated in the city's medieval *barri vell*. Apartments also available.

Address: Bellmirall 4 A.
Phone: +34 972 22 35 83.
Price: from 114 € double.
Web: www.hotelhistoric.com

Ciutat de Girona ****

Located in the commercial centre of the city, the modern decor of the building recalls some of the most emblematic sights of Girona. Good service.

Address: Nord, 2.
Phone: +34 972 48 30 38.
Price: from 100 € double.
Web: www.hotel-ciutatdegirona.com



Perfect view over the city from the terrace of the Palau de Bellavista

WHAT TO SEE

Especially at dusk, the silhouettes of Girona's Jewish Quarter create a world of perceptions and mystery where our senses thrill to the adventure around us. The Bonastruc ça Porta Centre, which houses the Museum of Jewish History, can be used as our "centre of operations", and from here, with a little bit of planning, we can organise a fascinating visit to *El Call*.

Museum of Jewish History

An intriguing world. From the valuable collection of medieval tombstones from the Jewish cemetery of Montjuïc, to the reconstruction of the figure of the great kabbalist Nachmanides - Rabbi Moshe Ben Nachman, or Bonastruc ça Porta to give him his Catalan name - the Museum of Jewish History presents a broad and surprising view of the Jewish people, which is vital to understand the history of Girona. In addition, the centre is located in one of the three historic synagogues



Jewish Votive Lamp (19th c.);
Museum of Jewish History

of *El Call Jueu*. During August, the concerts held in the *Patio de la Estrella* (courtyard of the star) offer a real treat for the ears.

Address: Força, 8.

Phone: +34 972 21 67 61.

Guided tours from July to mid-September.

Closed Sunday afternoon.

Web: www.ajuntament.gi/call

Calle de la Força

Calle de la Força was the Roman *cardus maximus* - the centre of commerce - and later became the main street of the Jewish Quarter. Today, in its medieval setting, we find both the Museum of Jewish History and the Museum of City History. In addition to the museums, all along the length of the street, from the monumental Portal de Sobreportas to the Plaza del Correu Vell, there are small 'treasures' to be discovered such as the *mezuzah* (the place on the right hand side of the door frame of Jewish houses where a parchment is traditionally placed) of the Placeta del Institut Vell.

Tapestry of the Creation

This eleventh century embroidered tapestry is one of the great treasures of Girona Cathedral. The many scenes depicted include a Jewish couple, which have become the emblem



Tapestry of the Creation

par excellence of *El Call*. They occupy just a small space on this incredible work, but their classification as "iudei" (Jews) in this great epic of the Creation of the World is one of the oldest and most beautiful references to the Jewish people in the city.

Girona Cathedral

Address: Plaza de la Catedral, s/n.

Phone: +34 972 21 44 26.

Closed Sunday afternoon.

Web: www.catedraldegirona.org

Museum of City History

Located on the site of a former Capuchin convent, the City History Museum reserves a special corner of the long history of the city of Girona for the Jewish people. A visit to the exhibition rooms includes the opportunity to admire items of great value, such as the Roman Circus Mosaic, and also provides an overview of the city, home, for at least six centuries, to a Jewish community of wise and learned men.

Address: Força 27.

Phone: +34 972 22 22 29.

Closed Mondays.

Web: www.ajuntament.gi/museuciutat

Carrer de Sant Llorenç

Undoubtedly one of the most intriguing streets of the Jewish Quarter, the Carrer de Sant Llorenç is a narrow corridor with stone steps that perfectly illustrates the uneven levels of the area occupied by Girona's *Call Jueu*. Closed until 1975, it gives access to an old synagogue - now home to the Bonastruc ça Porta Centre - and the splendid Jewish home of the last *nasi* or patriarch of the Girona *aljama*, the community of Moors and Jews.

Calle Manuel Cundaro

Along with the Carrer de Sant Llorenç, this street represents one of the best examples of the labyrinthine mystery of *El Call*. The medieval house on the corner of the street with the *escalera de la Pera* stone steps, now transformed into a hotel, is a magnificent example of the overlapping architectural periods and reforms in the old Jewish Quarter.

Torre Gironella

In the romantic gardens of the former Caserna dels Alemanyans in the highest part of the city, we still find the ruins of the Gironella Tower, where the Jews sheltered who fled the historic massacre of 1391. The legendary figure of Tolrana, the Jewess who preferred to die with her people rather than return to the side of her Christian husband, is still remembered here.

Arab Baths

A visit to the Arab baths is worth it, if only to admire the giant Star of David that presides over the *apodyterium*

or changing room. The beautiful, twelfth century baths include all the luxuries inherited from the Roman culture which was famous for the important role water played. Close by, we find another Jewish reference:

the monument dedicated to Anne Frank, in the Dr. Figueres Gardens.

Address: Ferran el Catolic, s/n.

Phone: +34 972 21 32 62.

Closed afternoons in winter.

Web: www.banysarabs.cat



Calle Sant Llorenç



Arab Baths

Other attractions in Girona

Girona Cathedral

The dramatic Gothic nave, the widest of its style in the world, the tower and the Charlemagne pulpit, the medieval tombs and the impressive altarpiece of the main chapel, are among the major attractions of the Cathedral, whose façade opens onto a great staircase connecting it with the lower part of the city.

Plaça de la Catedral, s/n
Tel +34 972 21 44 26
Web: www.catedraldegirona.org

Art Museum

Installed in the monumental building of the Episcopal Palace, the Art Museum contains one of the most valuable collections of Romanesque and Gothic art in Spain. Don't miss the Pubol altarpiece by Bernat Martorell, one of the most valuable pieces on display.

Pujada de la Catedral, 12
Tel +34 972 20 95 36/38 34
Web: www.museuart.com

Church of Sant Feliu

The extraordinary Paleochristian and Roman tombs located in the church presbytery testify to the ancient roots of this sacred place. Built in honour of the martyr Sant Feliu, here the remains of Saint Narcis, the patron of the city of Girona, are also venerated.

Pujada de Sant Feliu, s/n.
Tel +34 972 20 14 07.

Sant Pere de Galligants/ Archaeological Museum

The magnificent architecture of this twelfth century church is complemented by the pieces on display in the Archaeological Museum. One of the most valuable of these is a Greek altar dating from the second or third century BC. The cloister is another of the museum's gems.

Plaça de Santa Lluçia, s/n
Tel +34 972 20 26 32
Web: www.mac.es

Pujada Sant Domenec

Together, the fourteenth century Agullana Palace, the church of Sant Marti Sacosta, and the steps of the Pujada de Sant Domenec form one of the most attractive and original corners of the city.

Barrio de los Gremios and the Rambla de Llibertat.

La Rambla de la Llibertat is the meeting point *par excellence* of the old town of Girona. All around, the *barrio de los gremios* - the guild district - spreads its small maze of streets and alleys dotted with shops, cafes, and restaurants... delightful.

Bridges and Onyar river front

The sight of the Girona city river front is a spectacle worthy of Venice or Florence. From the Pont de Sant Feliu to the Pont de Pedra, via the D'en Gomez, de Sant Agusti, and Ferro bridges, a stroll from riverbank to riverbank offers stunning sights and views at all points.

Castillo de Montjuïc

The ruins of the Montjuïc Castle are full of romance and offer splendid views over the city.

Farinera Teixidor

Of all the buildings in Girona designed by architect Rafael Maso, the Farinera Teixidor is perhaps the best known outside the city, but there are many others worthy of note.

Cinema Museum

An intriguing and surprising museum full of curiosities that traces the history of motion pictures from their origins to the present day.

Sequia 1
Tel +34 972 41 27 77
Closed Mondays except public holidays
Web: www.museudelcine.cat

WHERE TO EAT

Simply mentioning El Bulli, Ferran Adria's restaurant, considered world number one or, again without straying beyond the city limits, another such notable as El Celler de Can Roca, will give a fair idea of the extraordinary quality of Girona cuisine. However, this city of four rivers - the Ter, the Onyar, the Güell and the Galligants - has many other restaurants that, while not reaching quite the same level of international fame, will more than satisfy discerning diners. Here are some of them, including those closest to the Jewish Quarter.

Albereda

Classic style restaurant serving a mix of signature cuisine and the essentials of traditional Catalan cuisine. Establishment located right in the centre of Girona's commercial area, opposite the old town. Good wine cellar.

Address: Albereda 7.
Phone: +34 972 22 60 02.
Price: 30 to 40 €.
Web: www.restaurantalbereda.com

Alemanys

Nicely decorated establishment serving local cuisine in the heart of Girona's *barri vell*, on the outskirts of the Jewish Quarter.

Address: Alemanys, 3
Phone: +34 972 21 35 51.
Price: 20 to 30 €.

Boira

The restaurant terrace is one of the emblems of the Plaza de la Independencia. Combines an impressive menu of Mediterranean cuisine, including specialities such as the famous coloured salad, with a good choice of *tapas*.

Address: Plaça de la Independencia, 17
Phone: +34 972 21 96 05.
Price: 30 to 40 €.

Cal Ros

Traditional Catalan cuisine made from top quality ingredients. The speciality is rice dishes cooked in a *cassola* - a low-sided earthenware pot. Set in the historical centre of the city, close to the Jewish Quarter.

Address: Cort Reial 9
Phone: +34 972 21 35 51.
Price: 30 to 40 €.

El Celler de Can Roca

A team effort by the Roca brothers (Joan in the kitchen, Joseph in the wine cellar and Jordi on desserts) is the trademark of the excellent cutting-edge signature cuisine offered at this restaurant, which boasts two Michelin stars. A true gourmet's delight.

Address: Carretera de Taijala, 40.
Phone: +34 972 22 21 57.
Price: over 50 €.
Web: www.cellercanroca.com

El Pati Verd

Seasonal cuisine with quality products and innovative presentation. Located within the Hotel Carlemany, the restaurant has a beautiful garden.

Address: Hotel Carlemany. Plaça Miquel Santalo, s/n.
Phone: +34 972 21 12 12
Price: 30 to 40 €
Web: www.carlemany.es



El Celler de Can Roca

La Llarga

Home cooking based on local ingredients. Includes some original recipes such as octopus *carpaccio* with special nut oils. Located in the Mercadal district, opposite the old town.

Address: Sant Francesc, 11
Phone +34 972 20 10 18
Price: 20 to 30 €
Web: www.lallarga.com

La Penyora

Creative signature cuisine based on the best seasonal ingredients. Vegetarian menu available, and good homemade desserts. Located right in the historical centre of the city.

Address: Nou del Teatre, 3
Phone: +34 972 21 89 48
Price: 30 to 40 €

**Sephardic menu**

The Bau Bar restaurant, located alongside the Cathedral, right on the edge of Girona's Jewish Quarter, specialises in Mediterranean cuisine. However, a special menu option is available that can be reserved in advance: a delicious selection of Sephardic cuisine. A highly appropriate way to round off a visit to *El Call Jueu*.

Address: Plaça de la Catedral, 8
Phone: +34 972 48 50 07
Price: 20 to 30 €
Web: www.baubargirona.com