Introducing Tarragona

By Jackie De Burca, author of Salvador Dalí at Home, who has lived in Spain since 2003 – with contributions from travel bloggers and locals.

As a huge fan of Barcelona, I can understand why so many visitors gravitate to this wonderful city and live in blissful ignorance of the fascinating city of Tarragona. I can only strongly encourage you to think again, and visit Tarragona, it’s a gorgeous city.

Arrabassada Beach © Alberich Fotógrafs

Tarragona is an hour from Barcelona by train or car, and only a few minutes away from Reus Airport (10 km), and was once the capital of the Roman Empire here in Spain. Today Tarragona is a place where history and culture are crowned with Mediterranean blue skies, blessed with beautiful beaches and adorned by an abundance of fine wine and cuisine.

Tarragona UNESCO Heritage

Walking around the area where you can see the amphitheatre, the views are absolutely amazing, as the amphitheatre is right by the sea. There’s something both odd and awesome about seeing it. Behind you are parts of Tarraco, which is one of Catalonia’s 9 wonders of UNESCO sites and heritage, but there’s just so much more besides in the city, as you’ll discover in this Tarragona Spain Travel Guide.
1. Introducing Tarragona

Tarraco is an impressive sight from many places, as are the views from the Mediterranean Balcony (Balcó del Mediterrani). The city has tangible history that palpitates around you, modernist architecture, a magnificent cathedral and Ramblas, not unlike those of Barcelona. In the Rambla Nova you'll find some unique Modernist buildings.

Rambla Nova

**Bubbling With Contrasts & Experiences**

Tarragona is a city filled with light, colour and contrasts, bubbling over with sensations for you to experience. On a Sunday go to the market, just outside the wonderfully impressive Basilica Cathedral. The contrast of the grandeur of the cathedral with the buzz and colour of the market is really something else.

Filled With Festivities (All dates below are for 2018 but they can be used as rough guidelines for other years)

Would you believe that there's hardly a month that goes by in Tarragona, when there's not at least one festival on? It's hard to say which is the best month to visit Tarragona. Maybe go in May if you're a foodie or a history buff, and be there for the **Tárraco a Taula (Roman foodie festival)** (11th-27th May).

Around the same time you can experience the famous **Tarraco Viva Festival** (13th-27th May) – the wonderful ancient Roman festival, where you can check out re-enactments, gladiators and much more. This is really out of this world.
1. Introducing Tarragona

One year we were in Tarragona on 11th March, so we were there for the Tres Tombs – Three Turns Festival. This is a tradition that is linked to Saint Anthony Abad, a patron saint of animals. The animals do a particular route three times with their owners, and get blessed. Tres Tombs translates into three turns. There were horses and Shetland ponies, some pulling chariots and others being ridden or led. It was so colourful and striking.

Or you could always visit in June, when you will have Corpus Christi (3rd June) where the traditional and religious elements are intertwined in the parade that features towering giants, dances and a drummer, who announces the beginning of the festival on horseback.

Then on the night of the 23rd June (eve of the Feast Day of St. John) is the Noche de San Juan – Night of Saint John – which is a fantastic summer solstice celebration. This is the ideal time to get rid of your bad stuff from the year before, by going into the water at midnight – in the midst of fireworks, witches, bonfires and parties that go on until dawn. In case that’s not enough, the Human Towers (UNESCO culture) kicks off in Tarragona on the 24th June until the 20th October.

2. Tarragona Top Sights & Experiences

1. Tarragona Cathedral Santa Thecla (Saint Tecla)

This magnificent Cathedral was declared to be a National monument in 1905. In the year 1171 construction began, and as is often the case, the site chosen had already been home to other spiritual buildings, such as a Roman Temple, a Moorish Mosque and a Visigothic Cathedral. Today the Cathedral of Santa Tecla looms over the old quarter majestically in the region's typical sandstone, with its emblematic soaring entrance and its façade's rose coloured window.
2. Top Sights & Experiences

The Cathedral just keeps on giving with its ever so impressive tower, spectacular altarpiece and numerous chapels.

2. Tarragona UNESCO Roman Ruins

Tarragona, formerly called Tárraco in Roman times, was a Roman capital of great importance. Archaeological excavations have revealed a collection of Roman ruins which present an impressive picture of how life was during that era. In fact this ensemble of exceptional importance was declared to be a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 2000.

The amphitheatre is a marvellous sight overlooking the Mediterranean sea, with a capacity for an audience of 15,000 people. Each year in May, the festival Tárraco Viva takes place for two weeks giving visitors the opportunity to immerse themselves in Roman life reenactments and experiences. The video below by the Tourist Board of Tarragona is a taste of this, filmed in the amphitheatre.

Other highlights include the Roman circus and theatre, two integral aspects of Roman life, which the Romans considered essential for a good lifestyle. In our routes section you can find the Roman Route, but some relics are even hidden in restaurants and rock bars in Tarragona's historical centre, the Part Alta.

3. Tarragona Medieval Route

The Cathedral is part of Tarragona's Medieval Route, which includes other highlights such as the King's Castle, the Jewish Quarter, the Church of St. Lawrence and the city's walls, which were originally Roman.
2. Top Sights & Experiences

4. Tarragona Modernist Route

Throughout Catalonia there are numerous marvellous examples of Modernist Architecture and Tarragona is no exception.

The Tarragona Modernist Route takes you to twenty three examples of this genre dotted around the city, including the city's slaughterhouse, the wonderful Ximeni's house, the Central Market and the fascinating boat-type architecture of the Metropol Theatre.

5. Wandering Around Tarragona’s Old Quarter

One of my favourite streets is Carrer Merceria (Merceria Street), which takes you from the steps of the Cathedral to the Baixada del Patriarca, with its wonderful Gothic 14th century arches.

This was the location of the farmers' market in the Middle Ages. These days you'll find a Sunday morning antique market there.

6. Tarragona’s Castellers Experience (Human Towers)

While the tourist authority of the city has adopted the theme of Living History, which is certainly true, Castellers are an absolutely essential aspect of the identity and culture of Tarragona. Castellers, which translates into human towers, is a tradition that can be traced back to 1712, in the town of Valls in the province of Tarragona. The practice didn't take long to spread to other places in Catalonia.
Incredibly impressive and of huge social importance nowadays in the Catalan culture, these human towers can go up to ten tiers. Today across Catalonia there are more than 15,000 people in over 100 groups passionately practising this amazing tradition.

As Tarragona was one of the earliest adopters of human towers, the city is immensely proud of this tradition and visitors can marvel at this spectacle from late June until late October.

7. National Museum of Archaeology (Tarragona Museu Nacional Arqueologic de Tarragona)

Website: https://www.mnat.cat/en/

Originally a provincial museum in the middle of the 19th century, Tarragona’s National Museum of Archaeology is home to a very important collection of artifacts from the Roman era, including pottery and sculpture.

8. Tarragona Balcony of the Mediterranean (Balcó del Mediterrani)

A beautiful balcony overlooking the Mediterranean, when you visit you need to “tocar ferro” which means to touch iron, on this special railing to bring you luck. Apart from the luck it is rumoured to bring you, the views are spectacular.

9. Saunter and sample in El Serrallo

El Serrallo is the fishermen's district of Tarragona. It is living history of the city's fishing tradition, which has been written about as far back as the 13th century.

Saunter around the labyrinth of cobbled streets with its characterful, colourful narrow buildings. Once rather rundown, the Serallo district is a vibrant place to sample some delicious seafood while absorbing Tarragona’s strong link to the sea.
2. Top Sights & Experiences

El Serrallo © Manel Antoli (RV Edipress)

Located in El Serrallo is a great fish market and a large fishing fleet. The only downside is trying to decide which restaurant to choose, from the numerous ones on offer.

10. Tamarit Castle (Castell de Tamarit)

Located 10 km on the road to Altafulla, on the N-340 at KM 1171, is the gorgeous Tamarit Castle which stands majestically overlooking the Mediterranean sea. It can be traced back to the 11th century and combines both defensive and residential elements. Today it is a wedding and events venue.

The whole walled village and the castle combines Gothic Romanesque and Renaissance architecture. In fact its church is one of the purest, earliest examples of the Romanesque genre within the entire municipality of Tarragona.

11. The Devil’s Bridge (Pont del Diable)

The aqueduct called Les Ferreres is one of the landmarks of Tarragona, and is known locally as the Devil’s Bridge. It gets this name from an interesting legend, more about that in a moment. As well as the impressive aqueduct, there is an eco-historic park there. It’s a lovely spot to explore the local nature and maybe bring your parents for a picnic. The first Saturday of each month is a big family day out there traditionally, with parents and children getting together to enjoy the privileged environment and famous monument.

According to the legend, there was an elderly couple who needed to cross the old wooden bridge, that used to be in the same location, to go to market each day.

The couple had a donkey to help them carry their goods to the market. One night there had been a very dramatic storm, so when the couple reached the old wooden bridge the next day, it had been destroyed. The man felt useless, knowing that he was no longer young and strong enough to build a new bridge.
The couple were in shock and feeling really worried about their situation, when a mysterious stranger appeared, as if out of nowhere. He asked them about their troubles, so they explained what had happened.

The stranger said he would build a new bridge for them. The couple asked what he wanted in exchange for the new bridge. He replied that he would want the soul of the first creature to cross the new bridge. After some time, they agreed, as they had no other solution. Of course they already knew that if the man could build a bridge for them like this, he had to be the devil himself.

The next morning they walked to the place of the old wooden bridge, and there was a fine impressive new bridge there.

The stranger had carried out his part of the bargain, now it was their turn. The woman used the rod to get their donkey moving and the three started walking over the new bridge. The donkey was the first one to cross.

The devil was very angry, but there was nothing he could do, except take the soul of the poor creature.

One of the biggest draws to visitors in Tarragona are the gorgeous beaches. The city boasts 15 km of coastline, with numerous beaches and a fine selection of pretty, easily accessible coves.

The beaches of Tarragona are well known for their fine, golden sands, which isn't a huge surprise as this part of Spain is known as the Costa Dorada, or Golden Coast.

The mild climate here means that between June and September you can enjoy some fun in the surf, while those who like nothing better than relaxing on a beach can indulge in this passion for a great deal of the year.

Some days during winter can even be around 20 degrees celsius, but other days could be a good bit cooler, plus we do get very interesting storms. That said, you can often enjoy some winter sunshine.

A major bonus, and a top reason why these beaches are so favoured by families, is that they gradually slope into the sea – as there are no sudden drops, they are perfect for little ones to paddle in.
There are many sporting activities organised on the beaches throughout the summer by the city’s Sport Council. This combined with the fact that many beaches are proudly displaying their Blue Flags make Tarragona a fine beach destination, apart from its immense beauty and culture. What many do not realise is that these beaches have a diverse and rich ecosystem, which is formed thanks to the life forms that live in the sea, meeting those which live on the land.

This in turn gives rise to a rich diversity of dunes and saltwater plants as well, and many different species of marshland wildlife and birds. The downside of mass tourism is that it damages this over the years, but Tarragona is very proud of the fact that they have two areas of conservation, which are legally protected.

The first reserve is called Punta de la Móra, known as PEIN locally. Here you can see a variety of flora, which also has a dense underbrush, with fan palms and Kermes oaks, plus gorgeous pines and junipers. Along this area, as in some other places on the coast, there’s the unusual sight, because of the wind – of some trees that have been bent into almost poetic shapes. In the sea there are several different strains of seaweed thriving along with a huge expanse of Neptune grass, which is a plant offering sustenance to a vast range of fish.

The second reserve is the Gaià River Delta and Tamarit Beach, where you’ll have the chance to see more than 80 different species of bird. Inland on this reserve is a coastal forest, primarily populated by poplars. Moving closer to the shoreline, the nature is dominated by beds of reeds. The authorities have a launched a programme to repopulate the area with native species, like willows and black poplars also.

Whether you’re travelling by yourself, as a couple or family, both of the nature reserves are well organised, offering routes, which show the visitor the reserve, but also aim to educate. They also do the same for bigger groups, including schools and universities.
3. Tarragona Beaches

Here are some of the Tarragona Beaches — by the way the word “platja” is beach in Catalan and “cala” is cove:

1. Platja del Miracle/Comandancia

Yes this is a busy beach, but not without good reason, it is the one by the amphitheatre, right in the centre of all the activity. Let's face it, who doesn't want to sunbathe, at least once in their life, with the backdrop of an amphitheatre? It's 500 metres long and 75 metres wide, with regenerated sand, which is cleaned on a daily basis. Access is via Pg. Rafael Casanova / Robert d'Aguiló and the number 22 bus stops here in the summer. The red cross are in attendance during the summer and those who come by car can access the beach from Passeig Marítim Rafael Casanova.

2. Platja de l'Arrabassada

Platja de L'Arrabassada stretches for 550 metres and is 65 metres wide. The sand here is very fine and cleaned daily. Access to the beach is off Pg. Rafael Casanova / N-340 and the buses which stop here through the summer are the 1, 9, 1E and 1M. The Red Cross are here during the summer months and access by car is via the N-340a, at the end of Via Augusta.

3. Platja dels Capellans

The fine, soft sand is cleaned every day on this tiny stretch beach which measures 60m long and 50m wide. Access to the beach is off Pg. Rafael Casanova / N-340 and the buses which serve the beach through the summer are 1, 9, 1E and 1M. The Red Cross are on this beach in the summer months and those coming by car can access by beach by N-340a, Cala Romana.

4. Platja Llarga

Daily cleaning takes place of the fine sand which makes up Platja Llarga. This is a massive expanse of beach measuring 300 metres in length and 30 metres in width. Access is gained via the N-340, km 1166-1167 and the buses which serve the beach through the summer are the 1, 9, 1E and 1M. The Red Cross are on hand through the summer and those in cars can access the beach via the N-340a, residential area.

5. Cala Fonda/Platja Arboçar

Arrobassada beach © Alberich Fotògrafs
Compared to some of the other Tarragona Beaches, Cala Fonda is a relatively small beach at 200 metres long and 25 metres wide. It’s a lot quieter being a separate cove, rather than part of the main beach and the fine sand here is only cleaned on a weekly basis.

Access is by Platja Llarga, just head north; or from Cala de la Roca Plana, you need to go south. The buses which stop here are 9, 1E and 1M. There are no Red Cross attendants on Cala Fonda at any time of year and the beach is only accessible on foot.

6. Platja de Savinosa

We overlooked this beach from the Hotel Sant Jordi, and did wonder if it is nudist. Apparently it is, but there were also people who were not in their birthday suits, so it is obviously flexible. It measures 350 metres in length with a width of 30 metres. The sand, which is cleaned daily is very fine and it’s easy to access from N-340, km 1165-1166.

There are several buses which stop here through the summer namely the 1, 9, 1E and 1M. The Red Cross are here throughout the summer and access by car is gained via the N-340a, Savinosa.

7. Cala de la Roca Plana

Cala de la Roca Plana is like Cala Fonda in that it is a cove away from the main stretch of beach. It is 205 metres long and 26 metres wide and the fine sand is cleaned weekly.

You can find this beach by heading north from Cala Fonda and it is only accessible by foot via Bosc de la Marquesa. There are no Red Cross attendants here and if you catch the bus the numbers you are want are 9, 1E and 1M.

8. Platja de la Móra

The Platja de la Móra is part of the second main stretch of beach in Tarragona north of Cala de la Roca Plana and is 520 metres in length and 65 metres wide.

The fine sand here is cleaned, by hand, every day and the Red Cross are in attendance through the summer to make sure all is well. Access by foot and by car is via the N-340 La Móra housing development or urbanisation. Coming on the bus? Then the number 9 will drop you here.

9. Cala Jovera

North of Platja de la Móra you will come across the tiny but very pretty cove that is Cala Jovera. Measuring only 40 metres in length and 8 metres wide, the fine sand here is once again cleaned daily by hand.

Access on foot in north from Platja de la Móra or south from Platja de Tamarit. The Red Cross do not attend this beach, the bus you need to catch is the number 9 and those coming by car will have to come along the Tamarit Castle route.
10. Platja de Tamarit

North of Cala Jovera is the longest singular stretch of sand attributed to being one beach. Platja de Tamarit stretches for 1750 metres and is 45 metres wide.

Access is gained by the Tamarit exit off the N-340 and by car you will come along the Tamarit Castle route. The sand is cleaned by hand daily, the Red Cross is here in the summer and the number 9 bus will bring you here.

4. Tarragona Family Days Out

In this Tarragona Spain Travel Guide, we have a few sections about enjoying Tarragona as a family. Here is the first section, but you will find more information in the guide that we wrote for your younger family members: Tarragona: 9 cool places to take your parents

Additionally there is also a day trip section from Tarragona – plus your children might enjoy reading about a local legend with a twist: Daniel the donkey and the devil’s deal

1. Roman Amphitheatre, Tarragona

Start off with the striking ruins of the Roman Amphitheatre that overlook the Mediterranean sea. Get the kids in the mood by telling them a bit about what used to happen in Roman amphitheatres. Your younger family members might enjoy learning about 14 facts about the Roman lifestyle.

It pays to plan ahead and get a pass that covers all of the venues, see more here.

2. Explore Tarragona’s Roman Ruins

Praetorium © Manel Antolí (RV Edipress)
4. Tarragona Family Days Out

The remains of the Roman city of Tarraco (Tarragona) are both impressive and educational. After seeing the amazing amphitheatre, go along to the circus, the city walls and the rest of the Roman Route.

3. The Subterranean Tunnels of the Roman Circus and Praetorian Tower

Discovering the long, subterranean tunnels that can be found under the Roman ruins is a fun adventure for your younger family members, and for you. These tunnels are situated on the route that goes from the tower to the chariot racing circuit.

4. Tarragona Land Train

Another way of exploring the city is by the Tarragona land train that you can hop on and off giving you extra flexibility. Tour around Tarragona complete with an audio guide to tell you what you're seeing.

5. The House of Festivals (Casa de la Festa)

A short walk from the Rambla Nova you'll find the Casa de la Festa. Get up close and personal to lots of great festival characters, figures of the city and ceremonial beasts. Admission is free and you can find the opening hours here.

6. The Eco-Historic Park of the Devil's Bridge (Parc Ecohistoric del Pont del Diable)

Situated on the outskirts is the Eco-Historic Park of the Devil's Bridge which is very popular with children. Its highlight is the impressive aqueduct that comes complete with its own fascinating legend. The park has lots of picnic areas and hiking routes so it can be a great fun family day outdoors.
4. Tarragona Family Days Out

7. Sirenas Mediterranean Mermaid Academy

I just adore the concept of the Sirenas Mediterranean Mermaid Academy. The school enables visitors to transform themselves into mermaids or tritons. Imagine being a colourful mermaid with a big beautiful tail. Once you've become a mermaid or triton, you get to practise firstly in the swimming pool before you are ready to move out to sea.

8. Tarragona Old Quarter

Tarragona’s beautiful old quarter is fun to discover however you decide to do it. As a family you could get on board the city’s mini tourist train or alternatively go on a guided tour complete with stories and history with a company like Segway Tarragona.

9. Beautiful beaches

With 15 kilometres of golden, sandy beaches to choose from along Tarragona’s coast, finding the perfect location for your family day out at the beach won’t be difficult.

10. Hiking Tarragona’s fascinating public paths

Tarragona has a marked network of public paths which are made up of trails, old bridle paths and old cart tracks. Filled with history, these paths are a wonderful way to experience nature and imagine life in the old days. These paths cover an area of 75 km (46 miles).

Download the official tourism map below:

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11. Scuba diving at Torredembarra

Scuba diving at Torredembarra is a great day out. Not only is Torredembarra a lovely town worth visiting in its own right, located only a short 16 km (10 miles) away, but it is also home to Odysea, who provide a variety of scuba diving experiences starting from €29.00
5. Tarragona City Routes

Roman Route

Tàrraco was founded in 218 BC, and this was the capital of the Roman Empire in Hispania Citerior. This was the Romans logistical base here, and covered an impressive space of 60 to 70 hectares, which included its own circus, a Roman amphitheatre, the provincial forum, amongst many other elements.

In 2000 this was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and below is a breakdown of the Tarragona Roman Route.

Please note: In Tarragona city, on Mondays all monuments are closed except for the Model of Roman Tarraco, the Cathedral and Diocesan Museum.

Follow in the footsteps of the Romans, and find out about life during the Roman Era. This route takes you to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Tarraco, where you can see the temple, walls, amphitheatre, circus, local forum and much more.

Maqueta de la Tàrraco Romana – Model of Roman Tarraco – Antiga Audiencia, Plaça del Pallol, 3 – This is a detailed model of what Tarraco was like at its peak.

Muralles – Walls – Avenida Catalunya, Phone: 977 245 796

3500 metres of walls were built in the 2nd century BC, of which around 1100 metres remain today. The Passeig Arqueològic is the highlight of the remaining wall, which borders with the old quarter of Tarragona. Unusual megalithic foundations are revealed in these very well preserved sections.

Plaça del Fòrum (Forum Square) © Alberich Fotògrafs

The Walls (Archaeological Promenade) © Manel Antolí (RV Edipress)
Temple – Temple – Pla de la Seu

The construction of the Roman circus and provincial forum had gained the city monumental status in the second half of the 1st century AD. In Tarraco the provincial forum had been constructed around two squares that were on different terraces – the upper one being the cult complex, which contained the magnificent temple. Of course today’s cathedral is also in this area.

Fòrum Provincial – Provincial Forum – Plaça del Pallol, Pl. del Forum and Pl. del Rei

The lower square of the forum measured 318 metres by 175 metres, and was enveloped on three sides by a portico, inside of which today you can still see a number of inscribed pedestals.

Circ – Roman Circus – Rambla Vella

Front of the Circus © Alberich Fotògrafos

This is one of the best preserved examples of a Roman circus in the Western world, where once our ancestors would have seen chariot races.

Amfiteatre – Amphitheatre – Parc de l’Amfiteatre Romà

As you may expect from films, this was where the fights and entertainment used to take place – so everything from fights between gladiators, to wild beast fights, and public executions.

Museu Nacional Arqueològic – National Archaeological Museum (MNAT) – Plaça del Rei 5

In the 19th century this museum was founded to merge two earlier museums, and today there is a fascinating, invaluable collection of ruins from Roman times. The exhibition at the museum presents a summary of eight centuries of Tarraco’s (Roman Tarragona) history. At the time of writing (October 2018) the main museum building at the above address is undergoing renovations. However you can still discover Tarraco and view a selected collection of MNAT in the Port, at Tinglado 4.
**Fòrum Local – Local Forum – Carrer Lleida**

This was the forum of daily life, but a fair bit of it was destroyed because of 19th century urban expansion.

**Necròpolis Paleocristiana i Conjunt Paleoaristolà del Francolí – Paleochristian Necropolis and Francolí River Paleochristian Complex – Avenida Ramón y Cajal 84**

A burial ground was started here in the middle of the 3rd century AD, which includes the remains of St. Fructuosus.

**Vil·la de Centcelles – Centcelles Villa – 4km – Afores, Constantí**

The remains you can see today are most likely of a villa which was thought to be built around the 4th century AD, although originally there are signs that it dates back to to around the 2nd to 1st centuries BC, of habitation.

**Aqüeducte – Aqueduct – 4km on N240 to Lleida**

Of two aqueducts that were built during the 1st century AD, the one that the Francolí river fed, which was around 15 km long, is today the most interesting surviving stretch, with around 217 metres remaining.

Although it’s official name is Les Ferreres Aqueduct, it is best known as the Devil's Bridge. This is because there is a legend that the devil built the bridge. We have modernised that legend for 21st century children and you can read it here: Daniel the donkey and the devil's deal.

**Torre dels Escípions – Scipio Tower – 6km on N340 to Barcelona**

Situated off the Via Augusta, this is a funeral monument constructed with large ashlars, during the early 1st century AD.

**Pedrera del Mèdol – Mèdol Quarry – 8km on N340 Barcelona direction, by the service area of Medol**

You can actually see many walls here, from where the Romans would have extracted blocks of stone.
**Vil·la dels Munts – Els Munts Villa – 14km – Passeig del Fortí, Altafulla**

Just on the boundaries with Altafulla, you can see a Roman villa that is impressive in terms of some of the surviving rooms, and the fact that there were actually three different bathing complexes.

**Arc de Berà (MNAT) – Berà Arch (MNAT) – 20km from Tarragona, N-340 Roda de Berà**

The N-340 is the National 340 road that runs right down to the south of Spain, and the Berà Arch was built back in the late 1st century BC, dedicated to Emperor Augustus, on what was in those days the Via Augusta.

One of Catalonia’s best known monuments, because of its shape and location, originally it was decorated with Corinthian moulding and pilasters, crowned by a frieze, architrave, attic and cornice.

**Tarragona Medieval Route**

There are a number of medieval monuments preserved in the city of Tarragona, of rich artistic heritage. This route takes you to a number of sites which include the churches from this period, the King’s Castle and the Provost’s castle, and of course the spectacular cathedral.

**La Muralia – The Wall, Arandes Tower, Montges Tower and Tintoré Tower**

The city already had Roman walls, which by medieval times needed some maintenance and repair, although the southern closure needed to be entirely re-done. This was reinforced by the towers named above.

**El Pla de la Seu – Cathedral Area – Carrer Major 39 and Carrer Merceria**

Here you’ll experience the city’s area which most retains its medieval ambience. There are a number of notable Gothic structures here, such as the Casa Balcells and the ancient rectory.
5. City Routes

La Catedral de Santa Tecla Tarragona – Tarragona Cathedral and the Cloister and the Diocesan Museum- Pla de la Seu

A truly magnificent cathedral, please refer to the Tarragona Monuments Section (coming soon) to read more about this, which also includes information on the Cloister and Diocesan Museum.

La Capella de Sant Pau – The Chapel of Saint Paul – Carrer Sant Pau 4

This is one of a number of religious buildings which has been conserved from the 12th/13th centuries. Austere in the interior, it has a rectangular entrance, decorated with a mullion, with a rose window which crowns it.

Another one of the preserved 12th/13th century religious buildings, inside of special note are two arcosolia, each of which contain a sacrophagus.

L'esglesia de Sant Llorenç – The Church of Saint Lawrence – Plaça de la Pagesia

This church is the only place of worship, which is entirely Gothic, left in Tarragona. Rebuilding was done in 1362 and inside there are two important medieval works – a late Gothic exquisite chalice and the spectacular Saint Lawrence altarpiece.

L'Antic Hospital de Santa Tecla – The Ancient Hospital of Saint Tecla – Carrer les Coques 3

Tarragona Cathedral © Alberich Fotògraf
Back in the 12th century the Call Jueu was entirely separate from the other parts of the city, linked only by four gateways to connect it to the outside world. From the 14th century, however, the Jewish Quarter went into a decline, and in 1492 they were expelled. Today much of this interesting labyrinth of streets has been partially destroyed due to old urban planning reformations, as well as some demolition.

**El Castell del Rei – The King’s Castle – Plaça del Rei**

At the beginning of Christian re-settlement, the King's Castle was built on the site where there was a Roman tower and until 1171 it was the city's Norman family's residence. When it passed back to the crown, it had restoration work done, and today you can see its southern façade, as well as the walls and arcades of its interior.

**L'església de Santa Maria del Miracle – The Church of our Lady of the Miracle – Parc de l'Amfiteatre Romà**

The remains of the church, which is actually situated at the very centre of the Roman Amphitheatre, date from the 12th/13th century.

**Tamarit – 10km from Tarragona, N-340 KM 1171 Tarragona to Altafulla**

For more information please refer to the Tarragona Monuments Section (coming soon).

In the early 19th century this was destroyed and today it’s only its northern façade that you can see, as well as the Archbishop’s tower. It is situated where the Archbishop’s Palace stands.

**Tarragona Modernist Route**

Find out about the city’s Modernist legacy, which reveals the beauty of the architecture, as well as the lifestyles of the people of that period. The route includes 23 different examples, amongst them the Tomb of King Jaume I, the Slaughterhouse, the Central Market, the Metropole Theatre, the Ximenis House and lots more.
1. El Teatre Metropol – Metropole Theatre – Rambla Nova 46

A modernist building constructed in 1908, the Metropole is a covered theatre situated at 46 Rambla Nova. We can see in the work of the architect, Josep Maria Jujol, a clear influence of Anton Gaudí. The design intends to be a boat which leads the spectators to the sea of salvation.

2. El Cambril del Convent dels Pare Carmelites Descaços – The Shrine of the Convent of the Barefoot Carmelites

In 1896, the architect Pau Monguíó i Segura, designed the plans for this project. Outside visitors can see a Modernist façade, along with Neo-Gothic elements on the church’s portal. The bell tower is styled with sculptural and ceramic tiles decoration.

3. La Capella de l’església de Sant Francesc – The Chapel of the Church of St Francis

This convent of St. Augustine formerly belonged to the Jesuits. It is classed as a cultural asset of local interest and its artistic value is because of its link with works of Rome and as an example of what was known as the Escola del Camp (The School of the Camp – being the area). These days it belongs to the parish of San Francisco (Sant Francesc in Catalan.)

4. La Casa Ximenis – Ximenis House

Another work of the architect, Jossep Maria Jujol, is the beautiful Modernist building, Casa Ximenis. This work of 1914, was rather challenging as the building is attached to the Roman wall.

The striking Modernist building climbs up to three floors, embellished with lots of beautiful sgraffito and wrought iron railings which knot on its balconies.
Jujol left reminders of his religious fervour with an inscription of Ave Maria on the house's entrance door and an inscription on the upper façade, in Greek letters fashioned from wrought iron, which reads: JHS – Jesus Salvador de los Hombres (Jesus Saviour of Men).

**5. L'església de Sant Llorenç del Gremi de Pagesos de Sant Llorenç i Sant Isidre**

This Gothic Church suffered during the Spanish Civil War, and it was Jujol’s brother in law, whom got Jujol involved in restoration and design work.

The various works of Jujol that can be seen there are later examples of his work. One of which is the 1942 passage of the Holy Sepulcher, made of wood and adorned with a fine layer of gold.

**6. El Santuari de Nostra Senyora del Sagrat Cor – the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart**

Another work of Jujols that was built in 1923, is the Church of the Sacred Heart, located in the Vista Bella neighbourhood of Tarragona.
Not only did he was responsible for its structure and architecture, but as he was a Professor at the School of Arts and Craft, Jujol also designed the furniture and decorative elements, including lamps, candle holders, rails, bars and doors.

Below are the remaining 17 Modernist highlights that you can visit in Tarragona.

7. El Mausoleu de Jaume I
8. L’estensori de la catedral
9. L’escorxador
10. La Casa Ripoll
11. La Barana del Balcó del Mediterrani
12. La Casa Salas
13. La Casa Bofarull
14. El Convent de les Teresianes (Col·legi Santa Teresa de Jesús)
15. La Casa del doctor Aleu
16. L’edifici de la Cambra Oficial de Comerç, Indústria i Navegació
17. La Casa Rabadà o Casa Vallvé
18. La Casa Porta Mercadé
19. El Mercat Central
20. La fàbrica de la Chartreuse
21. El vell Hotel Continental
22. El rellotge del port
23. La Quinta de Sant Rafael
6. Day Trips From Tarragona

Going south or slightly inland

1. Port Aventura & Ferrari Park, Salou 12 km/7 miles

I’m pretty sure I don’t need to introduce you to these famous theme parks! In our feature: Tarragona: 9 cool places to take your parents you can find costs and other information for the theme parks.

Afterwards you can check out Salou, be warned it is pretty hectic during the season.

2. Reus: the birthplace of Anton Gaudí & Catalan home of Vermouth 15 km/9 miles (inland)

Apart from visiting the Gaudí Museum, in Reus you can also follow a wonderful Modernist Route, as well as the Gaudí Route. In fact Reus only comes second to Barcelona in terms of the amount of Modernist architecture to be found in the city.

When Vermouth arrived in Catalonia from Italy in the 19th century, Reus naturally became its Catalan home of production. Reus was already an important world player in liquor production, ranking alongside the likes of London and Paris. Nowadays it even has its own Vermouth Museum.

Not only is Reus the birthplace of Antoni Gaudí but the pulsating heart of the city is packed with gorgeous streets, amazing architecture, stunning squares and lots of tempting shops.

3. Cambrils: a lively, lovely beach town with a gorgeous marina 22 km/14 miles

So whatever you do or don’t do in Reus, you should definitely sample the local Vermouth.
A lively seaside town which seems to attract lots of Irish families, Cambrils has lovely beaches, a gorgeous marina and areas with cute, cobbled streets.

It also has a good reputation for food and with more than two hundred restaurants to choose from, the main challenge is deciding where to eat. The Catalan authorities have also classified Cambrils as an official Family Holiday Destination.

4. L’Ametlla de Mar: lovely coves, beaches and an authentic port 55 km/34 miles

A relatively unspoiled fishing town with some idyllic coves along with blue flag beaches, L’Ametlla de Mar is a charming place to stop off for a while or a few days. The town also has some interesting sights to see.

5. Delta de l’Ebre natural park: unique landscape with paddy fields, sand dunes and birds 106 km/65 miles

In my earliest days in Spain, I used to cycle from L’Ampolla down into the unique landscape of the Delta de l’Ebre. Embraced by paddy fields, with funny little houses that seem to sit in the water, the Delta is home to a few small towns and has beautiful beaches and sand dunes.

Although the drive is a little over 100 km, it is best to be aware that the roads in the Delta are very narrow, so the journey will take a little over two hours.

Going north

6. Tamarit: a beautiful castle overlooking the sea 13 km/8 miles

Sitting on the right hand side of the Gaià estuary is the old seaside town of Tamarit, which boasts a beautiful castle that can be traced back to the 11th century that overlooks the Mediterranean sea. The Romanesque style castle was constructed on a rocky promontory and is embraced by the little medieval village, Tamarit.

Originally the castle's purpose was to defend the area from Barbary Pirates and Ottomans. Down through the centuries it has had a number of different owners. Today it is a spectacular wedding venue.
7. Altafulla: a gorgeous seaside town with abundant culture and history 15 km/9 miles

Altafulla is blessed with a lovely, sandy beach that meanders on for around 1 km with a backdrop of authentic fishermen's houses that stretch down the promenade.

The old quarter of Altafulla is a small distance away from the coast, but is super impressive with its Roman town, Els Munts, which is part of the UNESCO Tárraco Ensemble.

8. El Vendrell: a lively, lovely beach town with a gorgeous marina 35 km/21 miles

Best known as the birthplace of famous cellist Pablo Casals, El Vendrell boasts interesting culture and heritage, sandy beaches and good wine and food. In fact once you travel to El Vendrell you have arrived in the famous wine region, of Penedes.

Tarragona will spoil you for choice when it comes to eating out. From tapas to delicious evening meals, this Mediterranean city has plenty of foodie delights to sample.

However if you aren’t familiar with eating out in Tarragona, it is really important to know about the Menu del Día that is on offer in most restaurants at lunchtime, from Monday to Friday. This is a set menu, normally of course choices of at least three per course, of either two or three courses, often with wine included. This creation was left behind from the days of General Franco. Originally set up to ensure that the workers could eat a decent meal at lunch for not too much money, today it is an inexpensive way for visitors to Tarragona and other parts of Catalonia and Spain, to enjoy the local fare.

The average price ranges from €10.00 to €15.00 and although our recommendation for Menu del Día, Restaurante La Cuineta, is at the upper end, we certainly feel it offers a superb price quality balance.
Blogger and Freedom Mentor, Jane Clements, of Scarlet Jones Travels, will introduce you to her favourite area to eat. Jane travels a lot but spends quite a lot of time in Catalonia each year.

On the night we met him, he recommended Takeaway Sushi TGN and although we were a bit sceptical, given that it is a takeaway with a handful of tables, we had a fabulous meal and night there. More about that below! As well as his and our recommendations, we've collaborated with some other travel and foodie bloggers to bring you some more handpicked choices.

Jane's favourite foodie area in Tarragona: El Serrallo

One of the nicest places to eat in Tarragona, if a little touristy, is down by the port in what was once the area where the fishermen lived: El Serrallo.

Busy seafood restaurants serve paella, mussels and fideua to hordes of hungry people alongside the water. Large white canopies have been set up outside a line of restaurants along the pedestrianised street called Carrer de Trafalgar, where people can eat al fresco, although there is always room inside if you prefer air conditioning and nice tablecloths.

Further below are a few restaurant recommendations from one of our local collaborators, Joan Maixé, whom we met a few years ago when he owned a bar called La Tabacalería (an old tobacco factory).

Staff rush around bringing traditional large flat paella pans out from the kitchens and the drink of choice, which is vermouth is readily available.

If you want to eat seafood in Tarragona, this is the neighbourhood to aim for especially at lunchtime when it is a hive of activity with the loud chatter of Catalan, Spanish and foreign voices, the sizzling of prawns and the clink of glasses.

Restaurant Cal Joan

Located in the waterfront district of the Serrallo in Tarragona, you'll find Restaurant Cal Joan. This place strikes a very good price quality balance. Be aware that there's a lot of tapas bars in this area, but many are not as good quality. This one may be in an interior street, but it is good.

Another family restaurant that prides itself on great customer service and very good food, with an unsurprising emphasis on seafood.
Located in the old town, near the cathedral, the foodie offerings are terrific, and there's a superb Menu del Día for €15.00. This includes a starter, main course, dessert and a half bottle of wine per person. The menu offers a good range of options, but some of our personal favourites are the Risotto and the Papillote de Salmón. La Cuineta is also a welcoming place for families.

**More Information & contact details on:**

https://www.facebook.com/caljoanserrallo/

Most likely you'll be served by the owner. If you do go there, please let Celia know that Joan (this is our friend in Tarragona, it is pronounced Ju-an – it’s Catalan for John/Seán) from the La Tabacaleria recommended her restaurant. You can be assured of exceptional treatment in this charming, small, but wonderful place.

**Raco de la Mora, Tamarit**

Currently ranked no. 10 out of the 727 Tarragona restaurants on TripAdvisor, La Cuineta has been awarded the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence.
Raco de la Mora is a spot where you can enjoy a good variety of tapas such as sardines, rice based tapas, in a wonderful location.

It’s a family restaurant, that has been there on that beach forever. It is situated virtually on the sand of the beach, with a fantastic terrace.

More information & contact details on:

https://www.facebook.com/RacodelaMora

Although the Walthamstowfoodies were in Tarragona in 2013, many of their recommendations are still relevant today.

1. El Tiberi

Located in the lower part of Tarragona, is El Tiberi: a homemade Catalan buffet style restaurant, where you can eat as much food as you like. Prices range from €14.30 to €18.01 (tax included) but drinks are separate. The cost depends on when you go, with the lowest price available during the week at lunchtime and the highest price during the weekends, evenings and official holidays.

Starters include a wide range of salads, a mushroom rice, mussels, tomato bread and Tarragona sardines.

Main course offerings are plentiful with grilled meats that the Walthamstowfoodies especially enjoyed, lots of seafood, paella, pasta dishes and spinach with pine nuts and raisins.
There's a choice of sixteen desserts, featuring lots of temptations such as chocolate and honey crepes and of course, Crema Catalana – Catalan cream, which is similar to Creme Brulée.

**Website:** [https://www.eltiberi.com/](https://www.eltiberi.com/)

### 2. Racó de l’Abat

Situated in the upper part of Tarragona, close to the cathedral, Restaurant Racó de l’Abat is in a wonderful sixteenth-century building that used to be home to the Abbot of Poblet. The former palace was a firm favourite with the Walthamstowfoodies, where they had, **“the best vermut (vermouth) that we have ever tasted, local sardines, and amazing homemade cannelloni stuffed with hake.”**

Enjoy a three course lunch with a drink included during the weekdays in a cool, medieval setting for **€15.00.** Be warned that there is no menu as such, the owner comes to tell you what is on offer on the day. The restaurant is run by a husband and wife team.

**Facebook:** [https://www.facebook.com/Restaurant-Rac%C3%B3-de-lAbat-141092402591303/](https://www.facebook.com/Restaurant-Rac%C3%B3-de-lAbat-141092402591303/)

### 3. Méson Andalúz

Even though Tarragona is very definitely in Catalonia, I love the way the Walthamstowfoodies discovered this place – even if it is an Andalucian style bar/restaurant in Tarragona.

"We tried this backstreet bar out of desperation as we found most of Tarragona closed on Monday. They were offering a 4 course **Menu del Día for 7.90 Euro including wine.** It was full of older locals tucking in, seated in a cool, tile-lined dinning room.

On taking a closer look at the menu we found for a supplement of 8 Euro person we could upgrade to a lobster rice – so our super cheap lunch just doubled in price!
Lobster rice – Photo: Walthamstow Foodies

We should have probably upgraded on the house wine too. Anyway – fruit juice, a paella pan full of rice and a whole lobster and other seafood, roast rabbit main, and dessert for only 16 Euro each! During the week the menu price drops to only 6 Euro.”

Prices as checked October 2018:

Menu del Día-Daily Menu (Monday-Saturday) €7.90

Economic Menu (Tuesday) €7.00

Festive Menu (Sundays and holidays) €12.00

Rice with Lobster (sold by the portion, is not included in the menu as it is plentiful and people do not usually want more dishes) €12.00 per person

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/mesonan

Be sure to head over to the Walthamstowfoodies blog, where in the same article they also cover some recommendations for Reus – a city that is full of wonderful architecture, the hometown of Gaudí and is a very short drive from Tarragona (15 km). Warning: you can’t go there and not drink Vermouth!!

Take Away Sushi TGN

Having had an aperitif in Joan’s bar, we went off to try his recommendation Take Away Sushi TGN. He had kindly rung the owners for us, which given the size of the restaurant, was a very good idea!

Photo: Take Away Sushi TGN

As the name suggests the restaurant is a takeaway, however there are a handful of tables. Small but perfectly formed, and the sushi is to die for!
Although the food at Take Away Sushi TGN is strictly speaking sushi, it comes with a twist. **The dishes are a fusion of sushi with Catalan ingredients and creativity.** Run by a husband and wife team, the wife is the chef and she trained with her son-in-law, who had worked with the multiple Michelin star chef, Martin Berasategui, for years.

Fresh ingredients are served artistically, in dishes that taste perfectly balanced and are exquisite.

It has been a few years since we were there, but I imagine the couple still remember us today.

**My other half has a Miso Soup addiction** and as the Miso Soup there was so divine, he ordered a second bowl.

While the rest of the dishes had been served in a timely manner, around 20 minutes or more later there was no sign of the Miso Soup. I told him, “Maybe they thought that you were joking!” And yes this turned out to be the case. I reckon they still laugh about the guy who wanted a second bowl of Miso Soup.

The atmosphere was super friendly, in fact we got chatting to other customers at a nearby table.

Highly recommended!

Website: [https://www.sushitgn.cat/](https://www.sushitgn.cat/)

Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/sushitakeawaytgn/](https://www.facebook.com/sushitakeawaytgn/)
8. Tarragona Recipe – Romesco Sauce and Dishes

Apparently it made its first appearance in the fishing district, El Serrallo, on some small fishing boats, around the beginning of the 20th century. It is said that the sauce was created by using a bunch of ingredients that happened to be available at the time.

The concoction took off famously and each fisherman adapted the Romesco sauce to his own special recipe. Some added in tomato, biscuits or chilli. Since then the Romesco sauce recipe has been handed down from generation to generation. Just as you can do – especially if you love it as much as we do!

Romesco has come to the attention of many famous chefs

Not only do I and lots of other people love Romesco sauce, but over the years it has come to the attention of many famous chefs. We have a special section below for you to explore the links to their recipes that use Romesco.

Handed down from generation to generation

The photo above comes from Sue from The View from Great Island – check out her divine Shrimp in Romesco Sauce recipe.

Romesco mix

As well as Romesco sauce, there is also a Romesco mix. This is what you will need to make if you intend to do a dish such as a fish suquet or some other type of casserole. The differences between the sauce and mix are mainly in the quantities used.

Below are the two recipes, which have been written by Matias Leandro, Master Romescaire in July 2012 for the Tarragona Tourist Board.
Cold Romesco sauce

Basic ingredients:

1 head of garlic
2 romesco peppers
3 slices of dry bread
2 ripe tomatoes
100 gr. roasted almonds and hazelnuts
Oil, vinegar, salt and sugar

Preparation:

Roast the garlic heads, leaving a raw clove aside. Roast the ripe tomatoes and peel the skins off and remove the pips. Fry the bread (don't burn it), and place on kitchen paper to absorb the oil. Steep and blanch the romesco peppers in order to remove the pulp. Put all the ingredients in a bowl and blend adding a pinch of sugar, salt, some oil and vinegar (a little). Add salt or vinegar to your liking and let it cool.

Romesco mix

Basic ingredients:

1 head of garlic
3 Romesco peppers
4 slices of dry bread
150 gr. roasted almonds and hazelnuts
Oil, wine and salt

Preparation:

Fry the unpeeled garlic in oil, separate three cloves that we will use raw. Afterwards, remove the garlic skin. Fry the peppers without seeds, a few seconds, taking care not to burn them. If they burn, start again. Fry the slices of bread and remove oil on kitchen paper. Put all the ingredients in a bowl, a small glass of good wine, a pinch of salt and blend.
How to make ..Romesco

Once we have the Romesco mix we put it in a casserole where we will cook the Romesco. If the base is a roast then we should sauté it a little in hot oil. If the base is fried then we should directly add the hot broth that we have on top of the sauce, in small amounts, with a wooden spoon we stir the mix with the broth until it is liquid and the sauce is consistent or clear, depending on whether the cook prefers it thicker or not. We add the fish or meat in quite big cuts, about five or ten minutes simmering, add salt or broth to your liking, remove from hob and let it settle a while, and, let’s eat!!

You could add potatoes, better old ones than new ones. Add them before the fish, ten minutes so they simmer with the mix and get the flavour, afterwards, add the fish or meat, add salt or broth to your liking and the most complete Romesco is ready.

You can also add white beans which, once rinsed, can be added just before the fish.

We have said all this to try to explain and transmit that romesco is a dish that is alive, old and up-to-date at the same time, traditional but also avant-garde, a dish that is ours and that we hope will also become yours: TARRAGONA ROMESCO.

Another Romesco sauce recipe:

We tried this Tarragona Romesco sauce recipe and loved it!

© Chef de Home

Recipes from well-known international chefs

Jamie Oliver
Braised octopus with romesco sauce

Gordon Ramsay
Grilled seafood with sweet pepper sauce
(Gordon has re-named it, but it is Romeso!)

Martha Rose Shuman
Romesco Sauce

Nigel Slater
9. Tarragona Fiestas

Tarragona becomes even more vibrant and colourful during one of its numerous fiestas. The festivities of the festivals take place in the streets of the city and thanks to the many local and traditional Catalan holidays, you will be hard pushed to visit Tarragona when there isn’t a festival taking place.

Please note that all dates are currently for 2018, until the Tarragona Tourist Board updates the dates for 2019. To confirm dates click on Tarragona Tourism.

Three Kings: 5th January

The Three Kings is the biggest night for presents for children all over the country, making it more important than Christmas Day in Ireland and the UK.

On this night in Tarragona, the Three Wise Men arrive by boat to Escala Reial, where they disembark to tour in floats.

As they travel to the Town Hall, they throw sweets for the children. When they arrive, the Mayor gives them the keys so that they can leave the presents that they brought.

Gastronomic Sessions in the Old Quarter: 1st to 28th February

During February, the restaurants in the Old Quarter of Tarragona take part in this gastronomic festival, where there are many different menus to suit your budget.

Tarragona Carnival: 2nd to 13th February 2018

“Capgrossos” (traditional festive characters) © Alberich Fotògrafs

One of the biggest, best and most attended carnivals in all of Catalonia, this is best known for the spectacular parades of every kind of float you can imagine and the dancing that takes places right across the city.

The parades you certainly don't want to miss are the Rua de Lluiment and the Rua de l'Artesania.

Other highlights include the Judgement of Carnestoltes, the “King of the Carnival”, and bringing the festivities to a close is the Crema de la Bóta, when the figure of the Carnival King is ceremonially burnt in a gigantic wineskin.

Another amazing time to consider a trip to Tarragona.
Els Tres Tombs: 11th March

This procession of horses and carts through the city streets is one of the oldest festivals in Tarragona. After the procession the animals are blessed, gifts are handed out and there is a traditional “Coques de Sant Antoni” – Cake of St. Anthony.

Easter Week: 25th March to 1st April

You haven't experienced a traditional Easter celebration until you visit Tarragona during this holy period. This is a huge celebration of the passion, the death and the subsequent resurrection of Christ told through processions, rosaries and masses.

On Good Friday afternoon armed ‘soldiers’ embark on centuries old traditional marches as a preparation for the Holy Burial procession. This dates all the way back to 1550 and now has the official declaration of being a Festival of National Heritage Interest.

St Georges Day (Sant Jordi): 23rd April

This colourful Catalan holiday is a celebration of love and culture, which sees the city brimming with vibrant scarlet roses, numerous books, human castles and sardana dancing.
International Dixieland Festival: 25th to 30th April

The vibrant, infectious sounds of Dixieland come to the streets of Tarragona, in a colourful festival that celebrates all that is great about the 19th century origin of jazz. Around fifty concerts and activities are organised in bars, restaurants and theatres, as well as out on the streets.

Tarraco a Taula: 11th to 27th May

Tarraco a Taula is the series of gastronomic events that forms a major part of Tarraco Viva, the international festival which celebrates everything about Roman history. Numerous restaurants in Tarragona take part in this, re-creating ancient Roman recipes in all their glory.

Tarraco Viva: 13th to 27th May

Tarraco Viva © Manel Antolí (RV Edipress)

This symposium came about in order to raise awareness of the history and culture of ancient Rome in a spectacular way. There are workshops, conferences and re-enactments of what daily life was like in this era.

Also on offer are gladiatorial fights, period soldiers, music and theatre. You will find everything you could imagine during this festival from re-enactments to food, wine and entertainment. Educational yes, fascinating; absolutely.

Minipop Festival 1st to 3rd June

There are three days of fun to be had here where kids, and their parents, can take part in all manner of activities.

A children’s design fair, creative workshops and pop concerts are just some of the highlights. Learn more about the Tarragona Minipop Festival

Corpus Christi 3rd June
Corpus Christi 3rd June

The scent of freshly baked flat breads and cherries permeates the air, while dancing eggs bounce on sparkling jets of water that emanate from the fountains.

A massive parade takes place in the city, which is known for both its traditional and religious elements. These include towering giants, lots of dancing and the Magi de les Timbales, who is the drummer that announces the start of the festival on horseback.

Tarragona d’Tapes 14th June – 1st July

Using local ingredients, many of the city’s restaurants take part in this tapas festival. Visit the 2018 Tarragona Tapas brochure to feast your eyes on the offerings.

The DO Tarragona Wine Fair 15th to 17th June

Several of the cooperatives and wineries from the four different counties which make up the Denomination of Origin in Tarragona take part in this festival. It provides a great opportunity not only to sample the wines that come from this region but also to learn more about them.

Sant Joan (St John’s) Eve 23rd-24th June

The lively celebration of the summer solstice has its roots way back in time before the Christian era. This is a night of witches, roaring bonfires, amazing fireworks and partying ’til dawn.
Tarragona Fiestas

Tarragona City of Human Towers 24th June-20th October

Tarragona, through this festival, brings us closer to their 'human towers'; the cultural element which UNESCO designated to be included in their World Heritage list of Intangible Culture. Attending this unique festival gives you the chance to experience the bravery, strength and balance of this amazing phenomenon and integral part of the local culture.

International Fireworks Competition 4th to 7th July

The tradition of this fireworks extravaganza dates back to 1990 and has become one of the most important of its type along the Mediterranean coast. The providers of the winning pyrotechnics are then commissioned to take care of the fireworks for Santa Tecla, the city's biggest fiesta of the year.
9. Tarragona Fiestas

**Virgin Carmen Festival © Patronat Municipal de Turisme de Tarragona**

**Sant Magí 14th-19th August**

This is one of the major festivals on the Tarragona calendar, that really highlights some fascinating elements of the local culture.

You'll meet all sorts of great characters here; the giants, Magi de les Timbales, Gegantons Negritos, dwarves, the bastoners; which are dancers who hit sticks together in rhythm to the music, and many more.

The centrepieces of lots of other fiestas come together in this festival, culminating in something pretty spectacular. The castells (human towers) also play their part, as do a wide variety of cultural events such as concerts and theatre productions.

**Mare de Déu del Carme (Virgin Carmen)-16th July**

The Mare de Déu del Carme procession is another fine example of a traditional event which takes place in the fishermen's quarter, of El Serrallo. Sailors and fishermen ceremoniously carry the Virgin Carmen across the Mediterranean before disembarking at El Serrallo.

**Sant Roc (St Roch) 16th August**

Tarragona Spain Travel Guide - Travel Inspires
Sant Roc 16th August

As opposed to many of the other festivals in Tarragona, this is not a celebration of a person but a street. It isn't just any old street however, this is one of the most famous in the old quarter, Parta Alta. The start of the parade is signalled by a cannon blast, and then the merriment commences.

The giants and many other popular figures from local culture then proceed to dance through the streets and bring the neighbourhood to life. Sights you won't want to miss include Cós del Bou giants, which are known as the Gegants Vells (the old giants). These were given to the city in 1825 and are Tarragona's oldest giants. They were gifts to the residents of the Cós del Bou neighbourhood from which they get their name.

Santa Tecla 14th-24th September

The Santa Tecla Fiesta is an explosion of music, colour and happiness that courses through the streets of the city for ten days. It blends all the traditional elements of Sequici Popular with an endless array of human castles, dances, night time parades, medieval treats, mythological beings and ‘spoken dances’.

The latter are re-enactments, through verse, of the constant struggle between good and evil. There are several official declarations of Santa Tecla including being a Festival of Tourism Interest, a Traditional Festival of National Interest and a Festival of National Heritage Interest.

Catalan National Day 11th September

Elaborate and spectacular flower arrangements are laid out right across the city and historical events commemorated by Catalan nationalist acts.

Human Castle Competition 6th to 7th October

The very best human castle troupes (colles) come together in the Tàrraco Arena Plaça to take part in the most fiercely contested, most thrilling and exciting competition imaginable. You really don't want to miss out on this one if you can help it.
Tarragona Medieval Market 11th to 14th October

Soak up the medieval atmosphere around Tarragona's gorgeous Cathedral. Enjoy juggling and other street performances, while you choose from a wealth of artisan products on display.

Tarragona 1800 19th to 21st October

A festival that shows visitors how life was in Tarragona from the 17th to 19th centuries, with a special focus on the Napoleonic Wars. Experience and learn through reenactments about this period, including the 1811 Siege of Tarragona.

All Saints Day 1st November

The aromatic smell of freshly roasted chestnuts wafts from the numerous stalls that sell them around the city, during All Saints Day. Another tasty highlight of All Saints Day in Tarragona is the traditional pine nut sweets known as panellets, that are sold in the bakeries. Of course flowers for departed family and friends are an important feature also.

SCAN International Photography Festival 17th October-9th December

This festival is held on a biennial basis and gives the public an interesting and comprehensive programme of screenings, exhibitions, workshops and conferences.

Olive Oil Fair 30th November to 2nd December

This fair gives visitors the chance to sample the different olive oils that come from the Siurana Protected Designation of Origin. The festival is held on the Rambla Nova, right in front of the St Theresa of Jesus college.

Christmas – December

In the middle of December, Tarragona is lit up courtesy of thousands of twinkling Christmas lights as it hosts its fantastic annual Christmas Fair. Whether you are want crafts, ornaments or some hand made nativity scenes to take back home, you will find them all here as well as copious amounts of food and drink. It may not be as big as other European markets, but is is very charming.
Tarragona Hotels

Hotel La Boella: romantic & family friendly

Located around eight kilometres out of the city centre, in La Canonja, this romantic, yet family friendly hotel is a mere two minutes drive from Reus Airport.

A very charming hotel situated on beautiful grounds, La Boella is a boutique hotel at heart, with thirteen lovingly decorated suites. Modern meets exquisite elegance, with guest rooms complete with Bulgari and i-Pods.

Website: http://www.laboella.com/en/

Photo credit: La Boella Hotel

Hotel Plaça De La Font: most central choice & family friendly

In a fantastic central location, in Tarragona’s Old Quarter, only 500 metres away from the seaside, you’ll find the Hotel Plaça De La Font. The name translates into the Hotel of the Fountain Square.

While the rooms are not elaborate, this choice is all about location. A friendly place that has been recommended in the Guardian Newspaper, it is also good value for money at a from price of €57 per night for a double room. There are only twenty rooms, so you will need to book in advance.

Website: http://hotelpdelafont.com/en/

Photo credit: Hotel Plaza de la Font

Hotel Sant Jordi: family friendly & sea views available

We stayed here a few years ago as a couple, not as a family, to celebrate our anniversary.

We loved the friendliness, the sea views and the value for money. We had a room with views over the beach and sea, where we enjoyed sitting out on the balcony, trying to see if the beach was nudist or not!

Website: http://www.laboella.com/en/
There is parking available for guests. A taxi from the hotel into the city centre costs around €15.00.

**Website:**
http://hotelsantjordi.info/en/
Camping Las Palmeras

Close to the long golden sandy Playa Larga beach, Camping Las Palmeras has simple beachfront bungalows, perfect for a family holiday. Situated 9 km from Tarragona city centre, this campsite offers a lovely relaxing getaway that is still very close to the amazing sights and the action of the city.

This friendly, low key campsite has white beach bungalows, as well as lodges and pitches embraced by pine trees.

Photo credit: Las Palmeras

Camping Las Palmeras has play areas for your children, an outdoor swimming pool and two restaurants. At the shop you can buy freshly baked bread in the morning. It was recommended in the Guardian Newspaper.


Tarragona Spain Travel Guide - Travel Inspires
Tarragona is a lovely, lively city by the sea, with lots to see and do and it’s only 8 miles (12 km) away from the theme park, Port Aventura.

The area has some great beaches, one of which is overlooked by the Roman Amphitheatre. Tarraco/Tarragona was the capital of the Roman Empire in Hispannia, and the amphitheatre that you can see today is where they used to have all sorts of entertainment, including gladiators.

In May there’s an amazing festival that brings the Roman period of Tarragona back to life. There are lots of re-enactments, and there’s not many other places in the world where you can see something like this – it’s called Tarraco Viva. Another unusual thing to see in Tarragona are the Castellers – these are Human Castles. Tarragona is known as the City of Human Towers. Castellers are a Catalan tradition, you can check it out in this photo.

As Tarragona is on the Mediterranean, and has an amazing history, there are plenty of super places to take great photos. Before chatting to your parents about what you can do with them when you’re in Tarragona, you may enjoy reading our 14 fun facts about the Roman lifestyle.

1. Port Aventura

If your parents have hired a car Port Aventura is a short drive away, but if not there’s a train that runs around ten times every day. You need to go to Tarragona Estació (Central Station) to take the train to Port Aventura.

Port Aventura has 42 different types of rides, 6 different worlds and Ferrari Land Park opened there in 2017.

Cash facts:

Normal tickets: Tickets for one day cost €47.00 for each adult (11-59 years old) and €40.00 for children (4-10 years of age) and senior citizens (60+)

Ferrari Land has a separate admission price, check it out here.

Photo credit: Ferrari Land
**Large families:**

If you qualify as a large family, you can get a one day admission ticket for a special price. A large family is considered to be between 3 and 6 children. You will need to have relevant documents to be able to prove that you are a family.

PortAventura large family price: €155

Caribe Aquatic Park: €80


Yearly club for unlimited visits and other perks:

Port Aventura has a Club, which offers lots of different options, that also include benefits outside of the park itself, such as discounted car hire, but there are lots of others.

This is a yearly rate, so your parents would need to know that you would all get the use out of it.


**2. Tarraco Viva – May**

During the second half of May, the superb festival, Tarraco Viva takes place. Through re-enactments and experiences the whole family can enjoy and be educated about all aspects of Roman life.


Discover some fun facts about the Roman lifestyle

**3. Human Castles**

Human castle © Manel R. Granell
Definitely an experience that will be etched on your minds, the human castles that you can see in the city of Tarragona is really impressive. A tradition that can be dated as far back as 1712, these human castles go up in tiers of people doing this amazing balancing act, sometimes to heights of between six to ten tiers.

Human castles is an integral part of Tarragona's and Catalonia's identity. These days there are around 100 groups with a total of over 15,000 people who practise this across Catalonia.

4. Fishy fun

El Serrallo © Manel Antolí (RV Edipress)

El Serrallo, the fishing district of Tarragona, is a great place to take your parents one afternoon. El Serrallo is packed with character. You need to get there before 3.30 pm to see the fishermen coming into the port with their catch of the day. You get to see that fish don't just come from supermarkets and fishmongers!

It's a pretty cool photo opportunity as well. You'll know that the fishermen are on their way because of all of the seagulls, that escort the arrival of the colourful fishing trawlers.

Around the port, there's plenty to do. If Mum and Dad fancy a drink, don't worry they will have plenty of places to go at the Moll de Pescadors – the fishermen's dock. They can sit and have a beer, while you explore and take photos.

There's a Port Museum as well, where you can learn all about the port's heritage and the fishing arts. The museum opens at 5 pm in the evening during the summer, and 4 pm in the winter. It's also open in the mornings. On Sundays it is only open in the mornings. You can check out the opening hours here.

Port Museum © Manel Antolí (RV Edipress)

Cash facts: Family tickets €3.00 – if you go with a brother/sister/friend and you are under 16 it is free.

5. Boat trips

Another idea for somewhere to take your parents in Tarragona, is to get right into the sea spirit of things and head off on a boat trip! Sail along the coast and see some amazing places, with a sailing instructor.

Cash facts: This is a 4-hour trip that costs €45 per person. Please note that children must be 7+ years old. The same company also provide sailing and windsurfing courses.

http://cvplatjallarga.org/en/
If by any chance there’s a big group of you travelling together, or you know enough people, this company does groups of 20 people. Or you can club together with other people from your hotel/accommodation or campsite to make up the numbers.

The skipper’s name is Luis and his mobile is 619 819 676 – if you are calling from out of Spain, you will need to dial 0034- 619 819 676

**Cash facts:** €35 per person, includes lunch

http://www.tarragonablau.com

6. Kayaking

There’s another company, called **Tarragona Family Kayak**, who, as the name suggests, do family kayaking during the summer months. You’ll learn some basics firstly and then you’ll be off sailing along the coast and by some of the best beaches. You need to be over 6 and able to swim to go kayaking. It’s great fun and gives you a whole new perspective on this wonderful city.

Cash facts: Children 6 to 12 years old: €15 & Adults; €25 – this is for 3 hours

7. Yacht spotting

If you happen to travel to Tarragona during winter, you can go yacht spotting in Tarraco Marina. There are some amazing, big yachts moored in Tarraco Marina at this time of year.

8. Land turtles, ecological farming and meeting the farm animals

Not far from Tarragona, you can find the Hort de la Sinia Agroecological Park farm. (Parc Agroecològic de l’Hort de la Sini. Located in a gorgeous location, near Tamarit natural beach, at the mouth of the Gaia River, you can spend a few fun hours meeting the animals and discovering the farm.

The ecological farm is home to a land turtle breeding centre, as well as lots of other animals, including ducks, hens, roosters and geese. If you and your parents book in advance, you can take part in feeding the birds and collecting eggs, if there are eggs! Also there is a season garden and aromatic plants.
Afterwards you can head back to Tamarit beach, which is lovely and overlooked by this cool castle. The last time we were there, we stayed in the campsite that is just by the beach.

9. Visit the bridge that the devil made – The Devil’s Bridge

The aqueduct called Les Ferreres is one of the landmarks of Tarragona, and is known locally as the Devil’s Bridge. It gets this name from an interesting legend, more about that in a moment. As well as the impressive aqueduct, there is an ecologic park there. It’s a lovely spot to explore the local nature and maybe bring your parents for a picnic. The first Saturday of each month is a big family day out there traditionally, with parents and children getting together to enjoy the privileged environment and famous monument.

According to the legend, there was an elderly couple who needed to cross the old wooden bridge, that used to be in the same location, to go to market each day. The couple had a donkey to help them carry their goods to the market. One night there had been a very dramatic storm, so when the couple reached the old wooden bridge the next day, it had been destroyed. The man felt useless, knowing that he was no longer young and strong enough to build a new bridge.

Fun Roman Facts

The couple were in shock and feeling really worried about their situation, when a mysterious stranger appeared, as if out of nowhere. He asked them about their troubles, so they explained what had happened. The stranger said he would build a new bridge for them. The couple asked what he wanted in exchange for the new bridge. He replied that he would want the soul of the first creature to cross the new bridge. After some time, they agreed, as they had no other solution. Of course they already knew that if the man could build a bridge for them like this, he had to be the devil himself.

Photo credit: Hort de la Sinia
The next morning they walked to the place of the old wooden bridge, and there was a fine impressive new bridge there. The stranger had carried out his part of the bargain, now it was their turn. The woman used the rod to get their donkey moving and the three started walking over the new bridge. The donkey was the first one to cross. The devil was very angry, but there was nothing he could do, except take the soul of the poor creature.

If you would like to read a happier version of this story, then continue to our last section: Daniel the donkey and the devil's deal
Way back around one hundred years before Jesus Christ was born, Tarragona was called Tarraco, which was a massively important place for the Romans. In fact it is thought that it even became a Roman Colony. Today the Roman ruins, which are well impressive, are so important that they are now a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

Tarragona -Roman amphitheatre Tarragona

Tarragona's Roman remains are in pretty good condition and you can even see an amphitheatre right by the Mediterranean sea. When you visit **Tarragona with your family**, it will be amazing to see those ruins and imagine how the people lived there in Roman times.

**Here are 14 interesting and funny facts:**

1. The Roman Empire stretched from Syria to Scotland – but Rome was originally founded by Remus and Romulus, two twin brothers that had been abandoned and were found by a she-wolf, who took them as her own and fed them.

2. Remus and Romulus were the sons of the God Mars.

3. The Romans worshipped many different Goddesses and Gods.

4. These Gods and Goddesses were in charge of things like love, thunder, wisdom, war, fertility and they even had a God taking care of the sewage system of the city of Rome.

5. They used to eat funny foods like flamingo or dormice.

6. Fifty five years before Jesus was born, the Romans invaded Britain which they conquered.

7. They introduced concrete, straight roads, bridges to transport water (aqueducts) and central heating.

Tarraco Viva © Manel Antolí (RV Edipress)
8. Although the Romans were very family orientated, the lived according to a family system called paterfamilia. This meant that the male head of the family, normally the father, could make life and death decisions for his family members. So for example if a baby was born with some abnormality, let’s say he was disfigured, then his Dad may decide it was best to kill him.

9. A Roman father could also decide to sell a child into slavery.

10. Roman mothers stayed at home, taking care of the family needs and even educating the children, until a tutor could be found.

11. Vestal virgins, basically like priestesses, were chosen when they were under ten years of age. After being seen to be vestal virgins, they started to live in the temple. They took care of religious ceremonies and had to make sure that the sacred flame of Rome didn't go out.

12. The Romans used to eat their dinner lying down on a couch. They used their left arm to prop themselves up and would feed themselves using their right hand.

13. Clothes were washed in urine (pee) as it bleaches well because it contains ammonia.

14. Rich Romans used to work a six hour day and then head off to events like chariot races, the theatre, wrestling and of course the Roman baths.
Daniel the donkey & the devil's deal: a local legend with a twist

Thousands of years ago, in a magical forest, where the birds were so happy that they sang songs that made the leaves dance, an old man lived with his wife.

The ancient man, David, and his elderly wife, Caterina, lived such a long time ago that there were no planes, no trains not even cars, phones or tablets. No-one had even thought about making a bicycle and only the rich people had horses to take them places. The couple had the help of their strong, stubborn old donkey, Daniel, with his deep brown eyes, big ears and funny hee-haw sounds.

Catarina and David lived in a beautiful land, called Catalonia, where the sky was so blue sometimes when it met the sea below, the two seemed to become one. The elderly couple lived a simple life, surrounded by lots of gorgeous green trees, that sheltered them. They loved the trees, the birds, and all the creatures of the forest who came to visit them every day. The couple lived in harmony with all of nature. The squirrels were their friends and often brought them nuts.

They woke up each day in tune with the beautiful light of dawn. While getting ready for the day, the couple loved to watch the bright, yellow sun making its entrance onto the azure blue sky.

As there were no supermarkets at that time, each day they had to make their way to a nearby market to sell products to be able to buy food. They would load up Daniel, their donkey, with as much as he could carry without it being too heavy for him. Then the three would set off on their walk to the market. Although the journey wasn't too long, the road to the village went across an old wooden bridge, which stood over a deep river. It was a long, scary drop down into the gushing river.

This trip had become more difficult over the years. With legs that were no longer young and strong, David and Catarina had to walk slower than before. So did Daniel, the donkey. The three took their time, especially as they crossed over the ancient bridge.

But they also had fun on their journey. The deep wrinkles on Catarina's face seemed to dance as she told stories and jokes to her husband and donkey. When she smiled her eyes sparkled just like the stars that twinkled over their forest at night. Her infectious smile sent ripples of joy and love to her two companions. It was clear that the three adored each other and their simple lifestyle. Little did they know that this was all about to change.

One evening, in early November, when the sky was no longer blue, but dark and threatening, the couple were sitting down after dinner, holding hands and relaxing. “Look at how dark the sky is,” David said to Caterina. And just as she opened her mouth to answer, a loud crashing sound of thunder clapped overhead. Then the heavens opened up and down came big sheets of rain. Suddenly there was so much rain that they could hardly see the trees around them, and all the animals of the forest disappeared to find shelter.
Lightning made big zigzags in the sky above, and the noise of thunder became louder and louder. They were terrified, and the animals stayed in the safety of their shelters. The storm continued right through the night, making it hard to sleep much. The couple used that time to talk about the many good times they had enjoyed during their lives.

In the morning when they woke up, there was a feeling of calm after the storm. Even though they had slept very little, they felt happy about their chat about the good times. The birds were singing cheerfully again, as the sun was starting to peep out of the sky. The couple began to get ready to go to the market.

Daniel, the donkey, stood patiently while they loaded the goods onto him and then the three of them set off on their daily journey. The donkey had no idea what a drama he would have that day.

When the three reached the place of the old wooden bridge, the couple looked at each other in shock. Catarina said to her husband “Oh my love, what are we going to do?” He replied: “I have no idea, my darling.” They knew what they could see in front of them had entirely changed their lives. The ancient bridge had been washed away in the floodwaters of the storm.

David’s head dropped down in sadness, and he said to his wife: “This is a disaster. We have no way to get to the market, and now I am too old and weak to build a new bridge.” The couple felt defeated. If they couldn't get to the market, how would they sell their goods and be able to eat the food that they needed to survive. They both felt old and helpless.

As they were discussing their seemingly hopeless situation, a strange looking man appeared, as if out of nowhere. He was too thin and too tall, and wore a funny pointy hat, that shot up towards the sky. They had never seen this unusual man before, yet he spoke in the same way as them and the other local people. And although they both felt unsure about the stranger, under their desperate circumstances, it didn't seem important to enquire further about who he was.

He asked David: “Why do you look so shocked and sad, old man?” So David explained to the stranger all about the storm and the destroyed bridge. The stranger simply replied: “Don’t worry, during the night I will build you a new bridge. I will make it from stone, so that it cannot be washed away like the old wooden bridge.”

“What should we do?” David said to his wife, “There’s only one way that he could build a new bridge in one night, and that has to be some type of magic.”

“Ask him what it will cost us” Caterina whispered, “We need a new bridge to be able to survive.” So David asked the weird stranger the question.

He replied: “I’ll build the bridge for free in return for the soul of the first living creature to cross the bridge.”

The couple tried to hide their shock. Caterina leaned towards David and told him, “I need to think about this for a while.” She knew in her heart if he could do what he promised, he could only be the devil himself.
A short time passed and she looked very sadly at her old donkey, Daniel, who had not only helped them each day in their lives, but had become a furry member of their family. She whispered into Daniel's big fluffy ear, “I am eternally sorry Daniel, but I don't know what else I can do. I hope you can forgive me, my loyal friend.” Daniel looked at her with his big brown eyes, and hee hawed.

Caterina turned to face the stranger and said: “Yes, go ahead and build us the bridge that we need to survive.” She took her husband’s hand, and the three made their way slowly into the enchanted forest. Back in this magical place, where the animals, birds and trees were very happy, the couple started preparing something to eat. They made an extra special meal for Daniel. Both humans couldn’t stop thinking about how they could save their donkey next day. That night the couple tossed and turned, too tormented and worried to sleep.

In the morning, the three walked back to where the old wooden bridge used to be. They saw a fine stone bridge, with a double arcade that crossed perfectly over the deep river below. At the other side of the bridge stood the stranger, that they had come to realise was the devil. He was waiting with a smug smile on his face. The devil was looking forward to receiving his payment, but he had no idea what was about to happen to him.

“Caterina, what are we going to do?” David said, in a low, scared voice to his wife. Even though they had tried to make a plan to save Daniel, they were unsure how they could trick the devil. Caterina hugged and kissed Daniel, the donkey, with tears streaming down her face. She drove Daniel, who passed in front of her, crossing the bridge first.

The smile left the face of the devil, who was angry to have been deceived. Yet he remembered that he had said the words ..."first creature". And Daniel, the donkey, indeed was a creature. The devil was angry, as it was a human soul he had wanted. Even though he knew all animals had souls. The devil, like many humans, felt that a human soul was worth more.

Just as Daniel, the donkey took his last steps to the other side of the bridge, something strange happened. The devil, with all of his evil magical powers, had let himself become overpowered with anger and hatred, because of this clever Catalan woman. It was as if he had become a mere mortal for a few moments, with his dark gifts dissolved under a cloak of negative feelings.

Daniel, the donkey, used his innate animal instincts to sense the situation. He moved his strong body suddenly towards the devil, pushing him quickly, with special, stubborn donkey force. The devil fell down into the river. It only took the devil seconds to realise what had happened, and his evil magical powers were back, ready for him to use.
He levitated out of the river, flying up into the air towards the old couple and their donkey. His intention was to get his revenge and take all three souls with him to hell. Below him, the couple and their loyal donkey seemed frozen by fear. The devil flew around madly above them, gripped by anger and hatred for these simple beings. Possessed by his ugly need for evil revenge, the devil's flight path became more manic by the minute.

The four feet of the human couple and the additional four feet of Daniel, the donkey, appeared to be rooted to the earth. Paralysed by fear, it seemed impossible for any of the three to move even a millimetre. Scared of what the devil was about to do to them, the couple and donkey huddled close together. Even though they were all frozen by fear, as they touched each other, something magical seemed to happen. Their unspoken communication and love seemed to build an invisible bridge of support between them.

Suddenly a beautiful, silvery light sparkled on the river, that somehow seemed to hit the devil's body, as if he was being struck by lightning. Caterina knew from her inner wisdom and intuition that an angel had come to rescue their souls. She grabbed David by the hand and with her other hand nudged Daniel. The three moved with such speed, just as if they were all young, fast and strong again.

The devil was so furious that he turned a weird, disgusting colour. At the same time his power to fly disappeared. He came crashing back down to earth bumping the beautiful land below so harshly that he left a big hole in it.

The devil had no choice but to accept defeat. Caterina and David hugged each other, and Daniel, the donkey. All three realised that a miracle had happened.

Each day after, for years and years, the three crossed the Devil's Bridge. It reminded them of how close they had come to losing the soul of their furry family member, Daniel, to the devil. In fact they remembered that all three of them had almost lost their souls to the devil. Had it been their love that had called on the angel's miracle?

Today the Devil's Bridge still stands in Tarragona. You can see it and explore the enchanted forest, where this couple lived with Daniel, the donkey, almost 2000 years ago.

Daniel the Donkey and the Devil's Deal is adapted from a local legend

This story is based on the Legend of the Devil's Bridge, in Tarragona. In the popular version of the legend, the devil takes the donkey's soul, as there are no “official records” of an angel appearing.

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