



La Bisbal d'Empordà was one of the first villages in the Empordà region. Between the 8th and 9th centuries, the Frankish kings gave the Bishops of Girona the town of Fontanetum (La Bisbal) and, with the construction of the Castle Palace of La Bisbal and of Santa Maria Church, the town became an urban centre, Santa Maria de Episcopalis.

Today, the old part, which is now the town's shopping centre par excellence, retains a rich architectural heritage. The layout of the narrow streets and the numerous old buildings show the original structure of the town and the outline of the old city walls. La Bisbal d'Empordà is a place to be enjoyed slowly and leisurely. Therefore, we suggest an itinerary that starts at the Castle Palace.

1. Castle Palace

It was built at the end of the 11th century and beginning of the 12th century by the Bishops of Girona. It is one of the most important examples of Catalan civic Romanesque architecture. The castle was extended in the 14th century with the exterior wall and other rooms. The main façade was highly modified in the 16th and 17th centuries to give it a more sumptuous appearance. We recommend you to visit it and enjoy its history with the audiovisual presentation *Terra i sang: la guerra feudal a l'Empordà* (Land and blood: the feudal war in the Empordà region) and with the virtual visit paid by some characters from the Middle Ages. Outside, you can observe the remains of the wall of the castle parade ground.

To continue with the itinerary, go to Carrer Mare de Déu de Montserrat, in front of the Castle Palace, on the left-hand side. Carry along this narrow street until you get to Carrer de la Riera, heading to Carrer Cavallers. The portico you will cross through, in which there is a vaulted niche with the image of the Virgin of Montserrat, is worthy of a mention. de la Verge de Montserrat.

2. Portal de la Riera

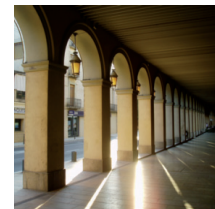
The Portal de la Riera is the only tower that remains of the ancient city walls that enclosed La Bisbal, built between the 13th and 14th centuries, and in which you can see some loopholes. Adjoining the portal, in Carrer de la Riera, there is Can Caramany, a 15th-century Gothic-Renaissance style building, which belonged to the Almars, rich traders in the Middle Ages. Several Gothic windows and one very interesting Renaissance one are worthy of a mention in this building.

Come out of Carrer de la Riera through the portal and go straight across Carrer Cavallers, towards Pont Vell.

3. Pont Vell

This bridge was built by Bishop Francisco Arévalo de Zuazo in a place where it would seem there had been another one. It has two arches and was the entrance through the walls of the mediaeval town from the Girona road. The bridge was fortified and had a tower with a portal in the middle. Behind the fountain that gives onto the square, you can see the bishop's coat of arms surrounded by the cross of La Bisbal and the date of construction of the bridge (1605). In the middle of the bridge there is a boundary stone for La Bisbal, on which the cross of La Bisbal is also engraved.

Les Voltes
Foto: Viadé (AIPC)



Pont Vell
Foto: Lluís de Miguel (AIPC)



Passeig Marimon Asprer
Foto: Xavier Gràcia (AIPC)



Carry along Carrer Cavallers, going through Plaça de la Llibertat, until reaching Avinguda de les Voltes. Cross the bridge over the River Daró until you come to Passeig Marimon Asprer. The River Daró is an example of a Mediterranean River, which is normally dry, due to its torrential flow.

4. Passeig Marimon Asprer

This promenade, with its hundred-year-old trees, along the River Daró, is an ideal place to enjoy a stroll. In 1879, the Marimon family handed over their lands to make a public promenade and in 1880, the route was extended and the first fifty plane trees were planted. In the promenade, there is El Mundial, a modernist style building from 1914 which is a cultural space and which houses the municipal theatre.

Go back along the path, cross the river again and go inside the porticoed building called Les Voltes.

5. Les Voltes

This is a set of porticoed buildings which form a single block, designed by the architect Martí Sureda i Deulovol in 1854, in neoclassical style, but with features that were very characteristic of Romanticism: the railings of the balconies and several decorative motives. You can enjoy the atmosphere of the commercial area and the numerous terraces of the bars and restaurants under the porches.

The itinerary continues under Les Voltes as far as Carrer Ample. Cross over the road and continue along Carrer Ample until coming to Plaça Jacint Verdaguer, on the right-hand side. Cross the square and head towards Plaça de Germans Sitjar, which adjoins the northern side of the church. We would point out the neo-Gothic style fountain in Plaça de Germans Sitjar, adjoined to the church. Continue straight along until coming to Carrer Alta Riera, where you will turn left and go into Plaça Major. Go up to Santa Maria church.

6. Santa Maria Church

Santa Maria Church was consecrated by the Bishop of Girona in 904. The old Romanesque church was demolished in 1701 and its materials were reused to build part of the current one. It is a Baroque-style building with a single nave with side chapels and a polygonal chevet. The monumental portal dates from 1757 and bears the coat of arms of La Bisbal; the belfry was finished in 1770 and it is one of the city's identifying features. The building you see in front of you, covering part of the façade of the church, shows the expansion of the church throughout the 18th century, which came very close to this old building. A notable building in the square is Casa Miquel, in front of the church, which was built in the 18th century by the Barons of Púbol.

To continue with the route, carry on up through Plaça Major, until you come to the Volta de la Mel, on the left.

Portal de la Riera
Foto: Lluís Bruguera (AIPC)



Nucli Antic
Foto: Ricard Corbi (AIPC)



Plaça del Castell
Foto: Lluís de Miguel (AIPC)



7. Volta de la Mel

This is found on one of the sides of Plaça Major. In the past, the square was porticoed and the vault known as the Volta de la Mel, built in the 18th century, was one of the entrance porticoes. Its name comes from the sale of honey (mel in Catalan). Plaça Major, the main square, is long and irregular in shape and it is one of the most popular places in the town, both from a commercial point of view as well as a cultural one.

Go under the Volta de la Mel, following Carrer de les Mesures -which got its name because in the past there were weights that were used as the standard for the sale of grain in the market- until you come to Les Voltes d'en Galí.

8. Les Voltes d'en Galí

They were built in 1835 by Joaquim Galí, a merchant who set up his clothes warehouse and shop there. It is an example of neoclassical architecture, consisting of a large porch with six arches sustained by stone columns crowned with Doric capitals. The Old Town Hall is in front of Les Voltes d'en Galí. Built in the 16th century, it was completely refurbished in 1928, during the Noucentista period (a Catalan cultural movement of the early 20th century). The use of local ceramics is notable on the openings and the crowning of the building and the stone high relief that represents the coat of arms of La Bisbal d'Empordà, under the main entrance

Follow the route turning to the left along Carrer Ample. This road follows the line of the old city walls. On their demolition, the town centre underwent significant urban growth. We should point out some of the houses and estates that you will find along this road. Turn right into Carrer Sant Jaume, heading towards Plaça Major. If you raise your head and look to the right, you will see the image of St James above the balcony. Half way up the road, there is one of the entrances to the "Call" or Jewish quarters, on the left-hand side.

9. Carrer del Call

This is the main hub of the old Jewish quarters. It is a narrow, shady street which zigzags along and is evidence of the presence of a significant Jewish community in the town. The first document that talks about the Jews in La Bisbal dates back to 1285. All that is left of the Jewish quarters of La Bisbal is this street.

We encourage you to take a look at it. Walk all the way along Carrer del Call to continue the itinerary. You will see the only two entrances to the district which were closed off to isolate the Jewish quarters from the rest of the Christian community during the Middle Ages.

On the way out, take Carrer de Santa Maria del Puig. Turn left, cross over Carrer Trinitat Aldrich and Plaça Nova in a straight line until you come to Plaça de Benet Mercader.

10. La Pietat Church

This church, in the purest Baroque style, was the chapel for the hospital and is connected to the building by means of a bridge so that sick people could easily get to the chapel. On the façade, there is the following inscription: "IN MEMORIA CAPELLA N.S. PIEDAD. REEDIFICADA 1783". The church, which was blessed on 17th of August 1788, was constructed thanks to donations from the faithful. The square, with its harmonious shape, has a neoclassical style monument with a fountain and is dedicated to the painter from La Bisbal, Benet Mercader.

If you would like to go back to the departure point, you can walk back along the way you came and go along Carrer de Santa Maria del Puig. If you take the first street on your right, it will take you back again to Plaça del Castell. Here you will come to the end of our proposed itinerary to get to know part of the heritage of La Bisbal d'Empordà.

We suggest that you finish off by contemplating and enjoying the city.

La Bisbal and the centres of Castell d'Empordà and Sant Pol conserve many more interesting heritage features: Sant Sebastià Convent, Sant Pol Church, the Salamó ice wells, Castell d'Empordà Castle, El Remei Hermitage and the viewpoint of the Empordà, among others. The Tourist Information Office has further information so that you can find out about all the heritage in La Bisbal d'Empordà.



AJUNTAMENT DE
LA BISBAL D'EMPORDÀ
Àrea de Promoció i Desenvolupament Local

LA
BISBAL
D'EMPORDÀ
Oficina de Turisme

Oficina de Turisme de Torre Maria
C/ Aigueta, 17
17100 La Bisbal d'Empordà
Tel. 972 64 55 00

Castell Palau
Plaça del Castell, s/n
17100 La Bisbal d'Empordà
Tel. 972 64 51 66

turisme@labisbal.cat

www.visitlabisbal.cat



Castell d'Empordà
Foto: Rubén García (AIPC)

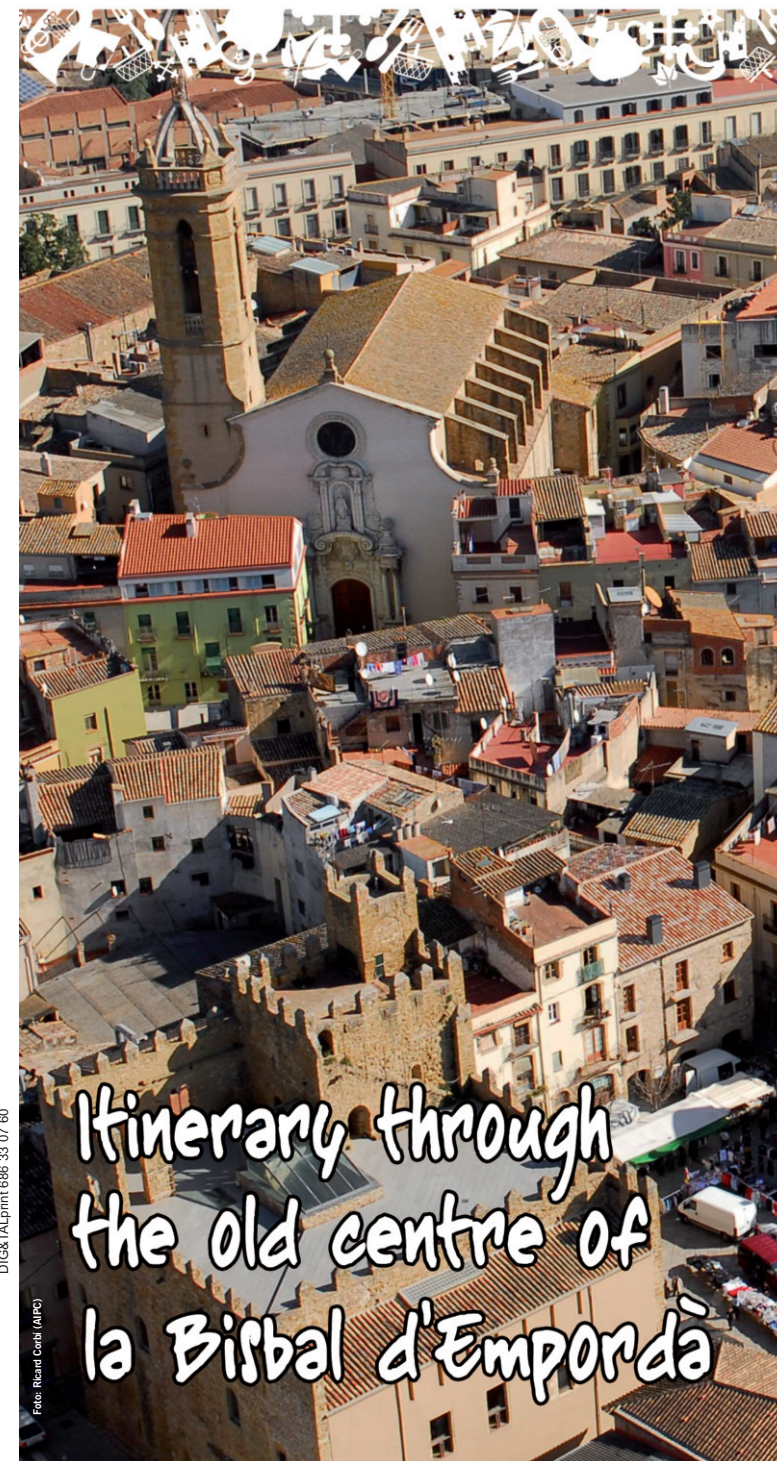


Sant Pol
Foto: Rubén García (AIPC)



Pous de Glaç d'en Salamó
Foto: Consorci de les Gavarres

LA
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