

VEPELLA DE GAIÀ CASTLE



Its position on the top of a hill and its architectural characteristics indicate that it was founded in the 11th century. The castle consists of a fortified rectangular enclosure with the same north-south orientation as the hill, defended at its northern end by a semicircular half-tower built on to the stretch of wall. In the middle of the eastern wall there is a square opening that allows light into the room built into the vertical cut of the rock. In the floor of the room a dungeon has been dug (a hole where prisoners were held). This is one of the few preserved mediaeval examples of a prison with dungeon.

LA NOU DE GAIÀ CASTLE



This is a castle with a long history, whose beginnings date back to the High Middle Ages. La Nou Castle has the appearance of a large 19th century manor house, with architecture far removed from that of a mediaeval fortification. The fact that it stands in the centre of an inhabited village, and the desire of the 17th century nobility for social prestige, led to a new residential building being constructed on top of the old castle. It was bought in the 17th century by the noble Francesc de Montserrat. The castle subsequently became the family seat of the Quatre Torres barony. Its most recent owner was Lluís Morenes, who in 1982 had it made over to the local authority. Since 2001 the castle building has housed the town hall.

LA RIERA DE GAIÀ CASTLE



Montoliu Castle, set on a hill, was built in a highly strategic enclave in the 11th century. The circular tower situated in the middle of the enclosure and the moat that protects the castle's northern and western sides are from this first period. The rest of the elements, together with the perimeter enclosure, correspond to the 13th - 14th centuries. The castle, with its rectangular layout, presents a notable constructive unity. One of the outstanding construction elements is the cladding covering the outside of the western enclosing wall. It is also known as Santa Margarida Castle and appears to have been destroyed during the French War.

EL CATLLAR CASTLE



El Catllar Castle is situated atop a small hill that overlooks the village. Documentary sources reveal that the settlement originated in the mediaeval period, in the second half of the 11th century. The remains of the present day fortification correspond to a new layout dating back to the late mediaeval, the 13th and 14th centuries. The castle is laid out as a quadrangular enclosure with the corners defended by towers and with an outer perimeter protected by a moat. The main facade has its northern and southern ends protected by two imposing rectangular towers. The main facade and the southern wall were protected by an impressive moat carved out of the natural rock.



ALTAFULLA CASTLE



Altafulla Castle dates back to the second half of the 11th century. Since the late mediaeval period it has undergone several alterations that have modified the initial building. The castle has a polygon layout, with square towers rising at the corners, in the form of defensive bodies. The central courtyard is noteworthy, preserving on the upper floor a magnificent Renaissance style gallery. From the main facade the building's height distribution can be observed. The pre-eminence of the floors is achieved through variations in the dimensions of the windows and their decoration. The facade is constructed in three parts, with the main door situated in the central part.



FERRAN CASTLE



Ferran Castle probably has its origins in the 11th century. The castle, as it stands today, with its walled enclosure capped with battlements, owes its architecture to the new tastes of the 17th century nobility. Its major architectural transformation, having little to do with the fortification built in mediaeval times, probably began with its incorporation into the estate of the Montserrat family. Documentary evidence suggests that Ferran initially consisted of only a single tower, of which no sign remains. It seems that by the late middle ages it had a structure similar to a manor house, but adapted to the needs of agricultural use.



TAMARIT CASTLE



The walled village of Tamarit lies right by the sea. Although there are no longer any remains of what was the fortified 11th century village nor its late mediaeval alterations, Tamarit is a good example, in the Tarragona area, of an enclosed mediaeval village. The village walls were ordered to be built in the middle of the 14th century. In front of this walled enclosure stands a watchtower built as a defence against the frequent attacks by Corsairs. Tamarit was purchased by Francesc de Montserrat, who became wealthy during the Catalan Revolt known as the War of the Reapers. He was given the title of marquis of Tamarit by King Carlos II, a title that would also be held by his successors, who would maintain their control until the end of the rule of the nobility.





INFORMATION

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FERRAN

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ALTAFULLA

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ON FOOT BY THE CASTLES OF BAIX GAIÀ



The present route runs past eight castles in the Tarragonès district, situated in the area known as Baix Gaià, in the municipalities of Tarragona, Altafulla, La Riera de Gaià, El Catllar, Vespella de Gaià, La Nou de Gaià and La Pobla de Montornès, with the River Gaià and the GR-92 route as its central arteries.

This route can be done on foot or on mountain bike, and halted at any point.

The route is marked out using standard vertical markers which can be found throughout its length. At the ends (or beginnings) of the route there is a signboard showing a map of the complete route.

Further information at <http://www.tarragones.cat>